

ROBERT H. GINN
September 10, 2003

Request for Pre-approval for Gastric Bypass

Dear Sir or Madam;

I am writing to request your pre-approval for gastric bypass surgery (Diagnosis Code: 278.01, CPT #: 4, Procedure Code: 43847).

I am 6 feet tall and I weigh approximately 425 pounds. My body mass index is 58; therefore, I am classified as being very severely obese. I ask for your pre-approval for this surgery. The following details are the issues of medical necessity:

- I am having significant adverse symptoms from my obesity. I have difficulty standing, and in doing any kind of exercise, even walking more than a short distance. I have difficulty performing any daily activities, and in participating with my family in recreational activities.
- I have sleep apnea. Sleep apnea -- the stoppage of breathing during sleep -- is common in the clinically severe obese. The health effects of this condition may be severe. It has been estimated that up to 50 percent of sleep apnea patients have high blood pressure. Risk for heart attack and stroke also increase in those with sleep apnea. People with sleep apnea often feel very sleepy during the day and their concentration and daytime performance suffers. The consequences include depression, irritability, sexual dysfunction, learning and memory difficulties, and falling asleep while at work, on the phone, or driving. This condition has a high mortality rate, and is a life-threatening problem. People are usually cured of sleep apnea by this surgery and the permanent weight loss it brings.
- I also suffer from high blood pressure. Essential hypertension, the progressive elevation of blood pressure, is much more common in obese persons, and leads to development of heart disease, and damage to the blood vessels throughout the body, causing susceptibility to strokes, kidney damage, and hardening of the arteries. If hypertension is not under control, many complications can occur as a direct result of continued high blood pressure. 60% of hypertensive people are obese. The weight loss attained by gastric bypass surgery will cure hypertension.
- Arthritis is a major comorbid condition that I have. One of the nearly intolerable problems is the constant pain of the weight-bearing joints. An increase in body weight adds trauma to weight bearing joints and excess body weight is a major predictor of osteoarthritis. This is a mechanical problem and not a metabolic one. The hips, knees, ankles and feet have to bear most of the weight of the body. These joints tend to wear out more quickly, or to develop degenerative arthritis much earlier and more frequently, than in the normal-weighted person. Eventually, joint replacement surgery may be needed, to relieve the severe pain. Unfortunately, the obese person faces a disadvantage there too -- joint replacement has much poorer results in the obese. Many orthopedic surgeons refuse to perform the surgery in severely overweight patients. The permanent weight loss of gastric bypass surgery will markedly decrease problems with arthritis and the ever-increasing expenses to the insurance companies that will surely follow.
- I suffer from venous stasis disease. The veins of the lower legs carry blood back to the heart, and they are equipped with an elaborate system of delicate one-way valves, to allow them to carry blood "uphill". The pressure of a large abdomen may increase the load on these valves, eventually causing damage or destruction. The blood pressure in the lower legs then increases, causing swelling, thickening of the skin, and sometimes ulceration of the skin. Weight loss after gastric bypass can relieve venous stasis disease.

- I become short of breath on any exertion. I cannot climb even one flight of stairs without stopping, and have a very difficult time performing the ordinary day-to-day duties of living, such as shopping, cleaning, getting in and out of a car or chairs, or to board a bus. I was once physically active, playing sports, and enjoying gardening, but at this time, I find that I am unable to perform any recreational activity, and feel depressed because I cannot control or lose the weight. Climbing stairs or even walking short distances causes the obese to become very short of breath. Obese persons find that exercise causes them to be out of breath very quickly. The lungs are decreased in size, and the chest wall is very heavy and difficult to lift. At the same time, the demand for oxygen is greater, with any physical activity. This condition prevents normal physical activities and exercise, often interferes with usual daily activities, such as shopping, yard-work or stair climbing, and can be completely disabling. Losing weight will cure respiratory problems.

I have made many attempts to lose weight, including:

Weight Watchers
Jenny Craig
NutraSystem
Herbal Life
Atkins diet
Mayo Clinic Diet
Gym memberships
Xenical
Adipex-P
and many of the over-the-counter diet plans and diet medications.

I have included exercise with all weight-loss attempts. I can lose some weight, but then I gain it all back and more. There is not one study that shows that dieting brings permanent weight loss. [The National Institutes of Health, in 1991 and 1992 consensus statements](#), rebutted conventional diets for morbid obesity, and pointed to this important fact: Diets alone cannot be successful for the morbidly obese.

Obesity has been shown to directly increase health care costs. In an article in the March 9, 1998, issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine 17,118 members of the Kaiser Permenente Medical Care Program were studied to determine the association between body fatness and health care costs. The results showed that patients with BMIs greater than 30 had a 2.4 times greater risk for increased inpatient and outpatient costs than patients with BMIs under 30. For patients with BMIs greater than 30, the study also showed increases in health care costs related to diabetes and hypertension.

Americans spend an additional \$33 billion dollars annually on weight-reduction products and services, including diet foods, products, and programs. Most of these expenditures, as is evidenced in my case, are not effective. Rather it can be expected that I will continue to gain weight over the ensuing years and add to this present list of obesity associated illnesses.

Seriously obese persons suffer inability to qualify for many types of employment, and discrimination in employment opportunities, as well. They tend to have higher rates of unemployment, and a lower socioeconomic status. Ignorant persons often make rude and disparaging comments, and there is a general societal belief that obesity is a consequence of a lack of self-discipline, or moral weakness. Many severely obese persons find it preferable to avoid social interactions or public places, choosing to limit their own freedom, rather than suffer embarrassment. I do not want the surgery just so I can look great. I need it for health reasons, as you can see.

I ask that you pre-approve this surgery so that I can become a healthy, productive person once again. Thank you very much for your consideration.

The Surgeon that I have selected for this procedure is in the PHCS network and is:

Sincerely,



Robert H. Ginn