



Designated Center of Excellence by the
American College of Surgeons and the
American Society of Bariatric Surgeons

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BARIATRIC PROGRAM AT THEDA CLARK NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

American College of Surgeons Cites Neenah Program

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) has named Theda Clark Medical Center a fully approved Level 1 Accredited Bariatric Surgery Center. Theda Clark is the first bariatric program to achieve this designation in the state of Wisconsin, and only one of a few in the United States to be accredited by two nationally recognized surgical organizations.

This achievement recognizes the Theda Clark Bariatric Program, which includes Midwest Bariatric Solutions, and surgeons Raymond Georgen and Kevin Wasco.

The accreditation by ACS is the second designation for the Theda Clark Bariatric Program. In November Theda Clark, Midwest Bariatric Solutions and Drs. Georgen and Wasco were jointly designated as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence by the American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS).

Obesity is an epidemic in Wisconsin and in the nation. According to the Centers for Disease Control, more than 60 percent of Wisconsin adults are overweight or obese and 24 percent of high school students are overweight. Nearly 24 percent of adults in Wisconsin are morbidly obese, or 100 pounds overweight, while 27 percent of the U.S. adults are morbidly obese.

Morbid obesity is a chronic disease that is difficult to treat through diet and exercise alone. Bariatric surgery, also called weight loss or gastric bypass surgery, is the best option for people who are morbidly obese and cannot lose weight by traditional means or who suffer from severe obesity-related health problems.

"Receiving this second designation by the American College of Surgeons really assures our patients that they are receiving the highest standard of care," said Dr. Wasco. "This accreditation means the Bariatric Program at Theda Clark has met specific documented performance standards from preoperative management to surgical and post-surgical care."

"This latest designation is a testament to the dedication of the physicians, nurses and staff involved in the Bariatric Program," said Kathryn Correia, senior vice president of Theda

100 Theda Clark Medical Plaza, Suite 400
Neenah, WI 54956-5217
Phone: 920.725.4527 Fax: 920.725.0991

Surgeons:
Raymond F. Georgen, MD, FACS
Kevin E. Wasco, MD, FACS

Clark Medical Center. "Our patients can be assured that they will receive the highest quality care possible for their bariatric surgery."

In 2003, 2004, and 2005, patients who had bariatric surgery performed by Midwest Bariatric Solutions at Theda Clark, saw a 66 percent reduction in the use of sleep apnea equipment, a 97 percent decrease in acid reflux medication, 54 percent decrease in high blood pressure medicines, and a 59 percent decrease in diabetes medication.

A recent survey of more than 400 Bariatric Program patients found that bariatric surgery significantly reduced or cured the incidence of morbid obesity related diseases. The survey results were:

- For patients who used a CPAP machine due to sleep apnea, a condition in which breathing stops during the night, 84% of these patients were able to stop using the CPAP machine following bariatric surgery,
- For patients using medication to treat acid reflux disease, 86% stopped using medication after 9 months after surgery.
- Nine months after surgery, 71% were able to stop using medication to treat hypertension (high blood pressure).
- Following surgery, 63% of patients discontinued the use of their diabetic medications.

The two surgical procedures performed by the Bariatric Program at Theda Clark Medical Center are the Gastric Bypass Roux-en-Y and Lap Adjustable Gastric Banding (Lap-Band). According to the ACOS, institutions providing weight loss surgery must have certain commitment, organization, leadership, human resources, and physical resources to provide optimal care. The professionals must have the necessary training, skills, and experience demonstrable, and offer reliable documentation of outcomes.

To become an ACOS Level 1B Accredited Surgery Center, the program must pass a site visit, submit all outcomes data and satisfy the following requirements:

- Performed weight loss operations for the past 24 months
- Surgery center performs at least 125 weight loss operations a year
- The director and bariatric surgeons are ABS certified

- Active surgeons perform 50 weight loss surgeries annually
- The center has fully staffed and equipped operating room, recovery room, emergency room, and intensive care unit for morbidly obese patients
- Performs minimally invasive procedures for morbidly obese
- Offers patient education pre- and post-operation
- Has protocol in place for patient discharge, follow-up and rehabilitation

Established by the American College of Surgeons in 2005, the Committee on Bariatric verification/consultation program for hospitals promotes the development of bariatric centers in which participants provide not only the hospital resources necessary for bariatric care. Each hospital has an on-site review by a team of experienced bariatric surgeons.

Midwest Bariatric Solutions was founded by Dr. Ray Georgen and Dr. Kevin Wasco to improve the lives of morbidly obese people in Northeast Wisconsin. In addition to performing bariatric surgeries, both doctors also routinely perform general surgery, trauma surgery and critical care medicine. A full review of their medical credentials may be found online at www.mwbariatric.com or www.thedacare.org.

Theda Clark Medical Center is also a nationally verified Level II trauma center by the American College of Surgeons. It has also been named a Certified Primary Stroke Center by the Joint Commission for Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and accredited Stroke Center. Theda Clark is recognized throughout Wisconsin for its innovation and quality care.

ThedaCare™ is a community-owned health system consisting of Appleton Medical Center, Theda Clark Medical Center and New London Family Medical Center, and many other health care services. ThedaCare is the second largest employer in northeast Wisconsin with nearly 5,000 employees.

For more information, media may contact Megan Wilcox, public relations specialist for ThedaCare, at (920) 830-5847, (920) 554-0730 (pager) or John Gillespie, manager of public and government relations for ThedaCare, at (920) 830-5846, (920) 554-1317 (pager).