Bariatric Program Requirements

ARBenefits will provide coverage for bariatric surgery for members who have completed all requirements in the Bariatric Surgery Pilot Program to include:

(1) Gastric bypass surgery;
(2) Adjustable gastric banding surgery;
(3) Sleeve gastrectomy surgery; and,
(4) Duodenal switch biliopancreatic diversion.

All program criteria must be met before Bariatric Surgery will be approved through the Pre-Certification process.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Primary insured only, no dependents.
2. Must have been the policy holder on our plan for at least 1 year.
3. BMI of 36 to 59 with an approved comorbidity.
4. BMI of 40 to 59 without a comorbidity.
5. Financially able to cover all out of pocket expenses including co-pays and deductible
6. No previous bariatric surgery.
7. Active employee at enrollment and at time of surgery.

NOTE: Approved comorbidities are: Sleep Apnea, Diabetes Mellitus Type II, Hypertension, and/or Osteoarthritis. The comorbidity must be verified by your surgeon or primary care provider.

Enrollment Steps

1) Go to https://my.arbenefits.org and log into your account.
2) Click on the Member tab, scroll down to the Forms tab on the right-hand side of the screen and then click on the 2021 Bariatric Program application.
3) Fill out the form on the page and click submit.
4) Once you click on submit, the form is sent to the Case Mangers at Health Advantage to ensure you meet eligibility criteria.

Need assistance logging in to your ARBenefits account?

Contact Member Services at 1-877-815-1017 option 1, then option 2 or send an e-mail to AskEBD@dfa.arkansas.gov. The ARBenefits Office is open Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Participation Criteria

1. Meet all the eligibility criteria.
2. Must participate in a minimum of three (3) months of nurse coaching with a Health Advantage Case Manager and continue contact monthly until surgery. The length of the post-operative follow-up scheduled is determined by your Case Manager and based on their professional

assessment. These intervals of contact will be set to meet your individual needs and will be a verbal contract between you and the Health Advantage Case Manager. **Maintaining contact with the Case Manager at the agreed upon interval is the member's responsibility both before and after surgery.**

3. Must have successfully completed at least a three-month health care provider-supervised nutrition and exercise program as detailed below.
4. Must have a working voicemail and email.
5. Must be able to speak with a nurse coach between the hours 8:00 am -4:00 pm Monday through Friday.
6. Must sign and return to Health Advantage the letter of attestation outlining the members responsibilities.

NOTE: No less than 20 days nor more than 40 days between contacts.

Nutrition and Exercise Program

1) A low-calorie diet or diet program recommended specifically for the member by his/her physician, mid-level practitioner, registered dietician, or surgeon.
2) Increased physical activity and behavior modification prescribed by medical provider.
3) Documentation of compliance monthly for a minimum of three (3) months and continuing until surgery is completed to show progress of weight loss or no net gain.

NOTE: A physician summary letter is NOT sufficient, and member's weight must be documented at each visit.

Other Requirements

1) Surgery must be completed on or before December of the enrollment year.
2) Documentation required for prior approval must be submitted by a Health Advantage In-Network bariatric surgeon.
3) Letter from the surgeon or physician monitoring/supervising the weight loss prior to surgery is to include:
   I. Recommendation of member for bariatric surgery.
   II. Weight History – documentation of monthly compliance for a minimum of three (3) months and continuing until surgery is completed to show progress of weight loss or no net gain.
   III. Records of all studies/procedures such as, but not limited to, sleep study, cardiac studies, hernia repair and operations on the stomach or intestines.

NOTE: This pilot will only cover the first bariatric procedure per lifetime. (Employees who have had previous bariatric procedures are ineligible for this Pilot.) Any and all of the above requirements may be subject to change.