



## Bariatric Pilot Program Requirements as of 3/1/19

*Members previously enrolled are subject to former requirements.*

ARBenefits will provide coverage for bariatric surgery to include:

1. Gastric bypass surgery
2. Adjustable gastric banding surgery
3. Sleeve gastrectomy surgery
4. Duodenal switch biliopancreatic diversion

The Arkansas State and Public School Life and Health Insurance board must approve additional procedures. The surgical procedure must be pre-certified by your surgeon and supported as medically necessary by your primary care physician prior to surgery.

### Eligibility Criteria

1. Only Arkansas State and Public School Employees, aged 25-65, with a BMI greater than or equal to 35 will be considered for bariatric surgery (no dependents or spouses).
2. **ALL** participants are required to enroll in a Disease Management Program.
3. The Employee under the plan must have been a plan participant for a minimum of one plan year prior to enrollment in the bariatric program.
4. No previous Bariatric procedures.

### Enrollment Steps

1. Go to <https://my.arbenefits.org> and log into your account.
2. Click on the Forms tab on the far right hand side.
3. Fill out the form on the page and click submit.
4. Once you click on submit, the form is sent to our Nurse at ARBenefits to review to ensure you meet eligibility criteria.

### Need assistance logging in to your ARBenefits account?

Contact Member Services at 1-877-815-1017 x1, or send an e-mail to [AskEBD@dfa.arkansas.gov](mailto:AskEBD@dfa.arkansas.gov).  
The ARBenefits Office is open Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### Participation Criteria

1. Candidates must follow the enrollment procedure outlined below:
  - a) The Employee must enroll by logging into their member portal (<https://my.arbenefits.org>) and click on the Forms tab to submit their enrollment form to be considered for Bariatric Surgery. If the member doesn't have the forms tab, make sure they meet the above eligibility criteria. All participants must enroll into three (3) months of nurse coaching with a Health Advantage nurse. The member is responsible for completing all program requirements including pre-surgery and one-year post-surgery coaching, physician-supervised treatment plan, and be followed by a Health Advantage Case Manager. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in the denial of payment for Bariatric claims.
  - b) Telephone contact with the coaches must be documented monthly, no less than 20 days nor more than 40 days between contacts. **(Responsibility for maintaining contact with the coach is the Employee's.)**
2. A three-month physician-supervised nutrition and exercise program to include:
  - a) Low calorie diet or diet program recommended specifically for the Member by his/her physician (or surgeon);

- b) increased physical activity and behavior modification.
- c) The program and the member's compliance with the program must be documented in the medical records at least monthly. This supervision is required for a minimum of 3 months, and must continue monthly up to the scheduled date of the bariatric procedure. If surgery is delayed, monthly supervisory visits **must** be maintained and documentation provided to the plan.
- d) Records must document compliance with the program and member **MUST** show progress of weight loss or no net weight gain. Member's weight must be documented at each visit.

**NOTE:** A physician summary letter is **NOT** sufficient

3. Surgery must be completed within one year after enrollment in the program.  
**Health Advantage will not be able to provide pre-certification until all necessary documentation has been obtained.**
- a) Documentation required for pre-certification regarding participation by an employee under the plan must be submitted by a Health Advantage in-network Bariatric Surgeon.
  - b) Letter from the surgeon or physician monitoring/supervising the weight loss prior to surgery is to include:
    - 1) Recommendation of member for bariatric surgery.
    - 2) Documentation of all possible medically related causes of obesity.
    - 3) Weight History – Including all weight, exercise, dietary, and behavior modification encounters with documented progress of weight loss or no net gain of weight. (In-network providers only will be covered by ARBenefits.)
  - c) Records of all studies/procedures such as, but not limited to, sleep study, cardiac studies (stress test, echocardiogram, and cardiac catheterization), and operations on the stomach or intestines, hernia repair.

**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.*