Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program Turns a Life Around

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For Josephine Lacaba, struggling with her weight had been a lifelong endeavor. “I’ve tried everything,” she says. For years, her primary care physician and endocrinologist managed her diabetes and blood pressure. Despite these efforts, she continued to gain weight, and it became clear that, at 49 years of age, it was time for more dramatic action. Her nephrologist James Burke, MD, suggested she meet with David Tichansky, MD, Director of the Jefferson Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program, about weight loss surgery. She was worried about possible complications, but Dr. Burke and her endocrinologist Serge Jabbour, MD, expressed concern that the alternative was to go on dialysis—a measure that generally cannot be reversed once it begins. She agreed to make the appointment.

She found great relief when Dr. Tichansky explained the details of the gastric bypass procedure and the lifelong support the program offered. Having come to the U.S. from the Philippines in 1988, English is her second language, and she appreciated how clearly and simply Dr. Tichansky explained the details to her. The Jefferson program is entirely laparoscopic, which means rather than a large incision, a series of small incisions are used to perform the bypass, which dramatically reduces the portions of food a person consumes. Ms. Lacaba decided that this was a step she was willing to take, for the sake of her health, and also of her husband (of nineteen years) and her eight-year-old son.

“In order to promote safety and likelihood of good outcomes,” says Dr. Tichansky, “we have all of our patients undergo extensive evaluations, since a significant portion of our patients have undiagnosed issues.” Ms. Lacaba underwent the procedure in early June and was in the hospital only three days. At her first follow-up endocrinology appointment three weeks post-surgery, she was delighted to learn that her diabetes had been
entirely cured, and she could also go off her blood pressure medication completely. Within 30 days she had shed 20 pounds; within two months she had lost 40, and by the three month anniversary she was 50 pounds lighter.

“I was amazed,” she says. “I’m really cured. I’m so happy to not have to worry about this. My chest pains are also gone, and I don’t get tired like I did before.”

She is extremely grateful for the active involvement of the comprehensive team the Jefferson program offers: Alise Kuhl, CRNP-BC, the Program Coordinator, and Michelle Moon, the dietitian, saw her at every visit and helped her know what to expect; Internist Janine Kyrillos, MD, a team member that makes the program unique, helps patients with any medical issues that arise; and Saidah Williamson handles the complex insurance issues.

“My family is so happy for me,” Ms. Lacaba says with a smile. “My husband teases me that he doesn’t have to take care of my medical problems anymore, and my son has learned a lot about diet and nutrition through all of this. He encourages me to exercise now, and he talks about us all staying healthy.”

For more information about Bariatric Surgery visit: http://www.jeffersonhospital.org/bariatric

This article is available in Jefferson Surgical Solutions: http://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss/vol4/iss2/2
Mr. Grasso had also lost his maternal grandfather to colorectal cancer in 1979 and was eager to support Jefferson’s colorectal cancer research initiatives. “It’s been almost 30 years since I lost my grandfather,” says Ms. Grasso. “I felt it was an obligation to make a difference in the lives of those who still have the disease.”

When I learned that ... 215-349-4808.

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On October 22, 2009, Herbert E. C Otto, MD, a Jefferson Medical College alumnus, professor of Surgery and Vice Chair of Quality, was honored at the Seventh Annual Jefferson Awards Gala. Dr. C Otto received the Achievement Award in Medicine to recognize his achievements in endocrinology and thoracic diseases. Gifts to the Gala in honor of Dr. C Otto will support education and research in thoracic surgery and endocrine surgery.

Joshua Eisenberg, MD (JMC, Class of ‘99) has joined the Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. Dr. Eisenberg, who completed his residency training at Jefferson in 2009, is board certified in both General Surgery and General Vascular Surgery.

Warran Malley, MD, has joined the Division of Transplantation as the Director of the Liver Donor Program. Before coming to Jefferson, Dr. Malley was the Surgical Director of Liver Transplantation at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, MD.

Gordon Schwartz, MD, internationally known breast cancer expert, returns to the full-time faculty as the director of the Jefferson Breast Care Center. Dr. Schwartz, professor of surgery, was a volunteer faculty member for 10 years here at Jefferson.

Dr. Carlo Deliso, Ernest (Gary) Rosato and Gerald Isenberg have each been named to serve on the Journal of Gastrointestinal Surgery editorial board.

Aaron Berger, MD, has joined the editorial board of the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

Jonathan Brody, MD, has joined the editorial board of the American Journal of Pathology.

Save the Date: The Jefferson Pancras, Biliary and Pancreatobiliary Center will host its 2010 Annual Patient Symposium on October 31, 2009 in Connelly Auditorium, Dorrance H. Hamilton Building. For more information, please contact Bridgett Eagan at 215-349-4808.

She decided to partner with the colorectal cancer Coalition, represented by Jenny Ashbrook, Maria Grasso and others, to raise money for colorectal cancer research. “I really care,” she says. “My chest pains are also gone, and I don’t get tired like I did before.”

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In order to promote safety and likelihood of good outcomes, says Dr. Tichansky, “we have all of our patients undergo extensive evaluations, since a significant portion of our patients have undiagnosed issues.”

Ms. Lacaba had to undergo a full series of endocrinology evaluations prior to any surgery and was in the hospital only three days. At her first follow-up—endocrinology appointment three weeks post-surgery, she was delighted to learn that her diabetes had been entirely cured, and she could also go off her blood pressure medication completely. Within 30 days she had shed 20 pounds, within two months she had lost 60, and by the three month anniversary she was 80 pounds lighter.

“I was amazed,” she says. “I’m really cured. I’m so happy to not have to worry about the chest pain and too much nutrition and food, and I don’t get tired like I did before.” She is extremely grateful for the active involvement of the comprehensive team ...

A fourth annual Jefferson Awards Gala will be held on October 22, 2009, at the 23rd Annual Patient Symposium. To reserve your place, please call 215-349-4808.

For Josephine Lacaba, struggling with her weight has been a lifelong endeavor. “I’ve tried everything,” she says. For years, her primary care physician and endocrinologist managed her diabetes and blood pressure with oral medications, but she continued to gain weight, and it became obvious that at 40-50% of age, it was time for dramatic action. Her nephrologist James Burke, MD, suggested she come to Jefferson.

Josephine Lacaba, 50 pounds lighter and diabetes-free, is one of dozens of success stories in the new Jefferson Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program, hosted by David Tichansky, MD in 2006.

On the Job Meet Sharon Molotsky, RN, BSN, CRCC – Page 3

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Philadelphia, PA 19107

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Jefferson Surgical Solutions is published by the Thomas Jefferson University and Thomas Jefferson University Hospitals

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For more information about Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery at Jefferson, please visit www.jefferson.org/hospital