

## **GRINNELL BARIATRICS**

December 3, 2006

For immediate release

For more information contact: Denise Lamphier, 641-236-2589 or 641-990-9979  
Jeanette Budding, 641-236-2590  
Laura Lof, 641-236-2954

### **Grinnell Bariatrics First in Iowa to Receive Quality Designation from American College of Surgeons**

*Grinnell, Iowa*—Grinnell Bariatrics, the bariatric surgery center at Grinnell Regional Medical Center, has been accredited as a Level 1a facility by the American College of Surgeons—the first and only bariatric surgery program in Iowa to earn the national distinction and one of 24 nationally.

The ACS developed the accreditation program to foster high-quality surgical care for patients who undergo bariatric surgery. Grinnell Bariatrics received the highest level designation and has met the essential criteria that ensure it is fully capable of supporting a bariatric surgery care program. It also means that Grinnell Regional's institutional performance meets the requirements outlined by the ACS Bariatric Surgery Center Network Accreditation Program.

“We are deeply honored that the ACS recognizes our skilled surgeons and hospital staff for the quality care that we offer patients. This designation provides objective assurance for all patients that Grinnell Bariatrics provides the most skilled and up-to-date services available for this challenging field of surgery,” says David Coster, MD, FACS. Coster chairs the surgery department at Grinnell Regional—which has a 30-year history of surgical treatment for obesity—and also serves as the bariatric surgery medical director.

Todd C. Linden, Grinnell Regional president and CEO, echoes Coster's views.

“We're pleased to receive this stamp of approval from one of the most prestigious accrediting bodies in the nation. The ACS accreditation validates why more Iowans

choose Grinnell Bariatrics and why people from all over the country travel here for this procedure,” Linden says.

Established by the American College of Surgeons in 2005 in an effort to extend established quality improvement practices to all disciplines of surgical care, the ACS BSCN accreditation program provides confirmation that a bariatric surgery center has demonstrated its commitment to providing the highest quality care for its bariatric surgery patients. Accredited bariatric surgery centers provide not only the hospital resources necessary for optimal care of morbidly obese patients, but also the support and resources that are necessary to address the entire spectrum of care and needs of bariatric patients, from the prehospital phase through the postoperative care and treatment process.

The ACS accreditation of Grinnell Bariatrics is important for Iowa Medicare recipients, Coster adds.

In February 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services determined that bariatric surgery would only be approved at medical centers that meet stringent quality and safety criteria in their bariatric surgery programs. Grinnell Regional is the first and only hospital in Iowa to meet those criteria through either the ACS or the American Society of Bariatric Surgeons—the only two pathways through which accreditation can be obtained.

“The accreditation of Grinnell Bariatrics will allow Iowa Medicare recipients who suffer from morbid obesity an opportunity for surgical treatment that is reasonably accessible. Without this accreditation, Medicare patients would have to travel to Chicago, Minneapolis, or Kansas City for the same level of service, a distance that is often impossible for the disabled obese, the economically deprived, and the chronically ill,” Coster says.

The ACS has four categories of accreditation for inpatient facilities (Level 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b). Each category has specific criteria that must be met by a facility. Each hospital undergoes an onsite verification by experienced bariatric surgeons, who review the center’s structure, process, and data using the current *ACS Bariatric Surgery Center Network Accreditation Program Manual* as a guideline in conducting the survey.

Accredited bariatric surgery centers are required to report their bariatric surgery outcomes. Tracking these data assures that the highest quality of surgical care is

maintained and allows the program to compare its outcomes with national outcomes. Grinnell Regional is also enrolled in the ACS National Surgical Quality Improvement Program.

In addition to Coster, Grinnell Bariatric surgeons David Kermode, DO, and Stephen Sundberg, MD, perform open and laparoscopic gastric bypass, lap band procedures, and complex revision surgery.

Grinnell Bariatrics is Iowa's most comprehensive bariatric program. The program includes:

- A bariatric educator/coordinator who meets individually with each patient.
- A medical weight loss program.
- Psycho-social support groups.
- Exercise and conditioning programs.
- Personal coaching.
- Pool therapy.
- A comprehensive pain management clinic.
- Up-to-date nutritional advice.
- Physical and occupational therapy.
- Massage therapy and acupuncture.
- A holistic approach to the patient needs.

The ACS recognition is the second honor Grinnell Bariatrics has received. In 2005, Grinnell Regional was identified by Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence for having a well-integrated program that helps promote patient safety and provides cross-functional team support to bariatric surgery patients.

"I'm proud of all of our dedicated and expert physicians and staff. They have created a program that takes care of our patients completely," Linden says.

Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in Iowa and the United States. In the United States, more than 11 million people suffer from severe obesity, and the numbers continue to increase. Obesity increases the risks of morbidity and mortality because of the diseases and conditions that are commonly associated with it, such as type II diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, among other health risks. Currently, weight-

loss surgery provides the most effective treatment for individuals who are extremely overweight, suffer from obesity-related illnesses, and have failed all traditional medical management techniques. The ACS believes it is important to extend its quality initiatives to accrediting bariatric surgery centers so that it can assist the public in identifying those facilities that provide optimal surgical care for patients who undergo this surgical procedure.

The American College of Surgeons is a scientific and educational association of surgeons that was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical education and practice and to improve the care of the surgical patient. Its achievements have placed it at the forefront of American surgery and have made the ACS an important advocate for all surgical patients. The ACS has more than 70,000 members and is the largest organization of surgeons in the world.

For more information about Grinnell Bariatrics, please visit <http://www.grmc.us/services/bariatric/index.html>.

###