

NEWS RELEASE

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FDA Approves Expanded Use of Lap Band for Obese Adults

For Immediate Release

ROME, Ga., April 25, 2011 – With expanded indications for Lap Band surgery, twenty-three million more Americans now meet the medical criteria for bariatric (weight loss) surgery, according to Harbin Clinic surgeon J. Ryland Scott, MD, FACS. Dr. Scott is Medical Director of the Harbin Clinic/Floyd Medical Center Bariatric Program.

Because of 17 years of data demonstrating safety and improved outcomes, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved broader indications for Lap Band surgery. Lap Band is a laparoscopic surgical procedure which places a band around the patient's stomach restricting food intake. Historically, patients with a Body Mass Index (BMI) greater than 35 (about 75 pounds overweight) with obesity related medical conditions qualified for weight loss surgery, but under the new FDA guidelines, patients with obesity related medical conditions and a BMI greater than 30 (about 30-40 pounds overweight) now qualify for surgery. For example, a person 5-foot, 2-inches tall,

weighing 165 pounds with diabetes, is now eligible for the procedure. Previously, this person needed to weigh at least 192 pounds with one medical condition or 220 pounds without any medical conditions. The expanded criteria means twenty-three million more people in the United States now qualify for weight loss surgery.

The FDA advisory panel unanimously supported the efficacy of the Lap Band in this new patient population with a BMI >30 (30-40 pounds overweight) and one obesity related medical condition. One year following Lap Band surgery, 84% of patients lost at least 30% of their excess weight, the average weight loss was 64% of their excess body weight, and 65% of patients were no longer obese.

In addition to losing weight, many bariatric patients experience dramatic improvements in diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, joint disease, gastroesophageal reflux disease, stress urinary incontinence, and lower back pain. These conditions often disappear in patients who have bariatric procedures.

According to Dr. Scott, “Surgery alone is not a reliable solution for obesity.” Patients in the Harbin Clinic/Floyd Medical Center bariatric program receive comprehensive care including: support from certified bariatric nurses who help in the coordination of care, counseling from an experienced bariatric dietitian who sees patients preoperatively and at every follow-up visit, consultations when necessary through a network of Harbin Clinic specialists linked together via an electronic medical record, and the advantages of dedicated hospital facilities including experienced bariatric surgical nurses, high definition laparoscopy equipment, and hospital rooms designed for and

dedicated to bariatric patients. The bariatric program also has an outcomes management program to assure ongoing quality improvement.

The Harbin Clinic/Floyd Medical Center bariatric program is a Center of Excellence through the American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery and the Surgical Review Corporation. According to Dr. Scott, Center of Excellence designation is based on quality measures. “The 159 patients who underwent weight loss surgery in 2010 through the Harbin Clinic/Floyd Medical Center program showed no mortalities, no readmissions, no admissions to the Intensive Care Unit or prolonged hospitalizations, no conversions to open surgery, no leaks or perforations, and no wound infections. We have an excellent team that is dedicated to quality outcomes” Dr. Scott said.

For additional information on the program, visit www.harbinclinic.com and select bariatric center, or visit www.floydbariatrics.org, or call 706-378-8140 (Toll Free: 1-800-803-2065).