

## First Choice Health's Case Management's toll-free number is (800) 808-0450

### Physician-supervised Nutrition and Exercise Program

A physician-supervised nutrition and exercise program includes your working closely with a team of licensed providers to help you make the necessary behavior changes to help you reach your short and long-term weight loss goals. A physician supervised multidisciplinary program for meeting this standard must meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. The program must be supervised and monitored by the physician
2. The nutrition and exercise program(s) must:
  - a. be for a cumulative total of 6 months or longer in duration
  - b. occur within one year prior to surgery
  - c. you must participate in one program for at least six consecutive months
  - d. Prior authorization may be made prior to completion of nutrition and exercise program as long as a consecutive six-month's participation in a multidisciplinary program(s) will be completed prior to the date of surgery
3. The nutrition and exercise program may be administered as part of the surgical preparative regimen, and participation in the nutrition and exercise program may be supervised by the surgeon who will perform the surgery or by some other physician
4. You must lose 10% of your starting body weight prior to surgery

Your physician, who supervised your program, must provide your FCH Case Manager with a summary and assessment and all supporting medical records that document your participation in the medically supervised program to preauthorize your surgery. For members who participate in a medically supervised nutrition and exercise program (e.g.,

Medifast, Optifast), records documenting your participation and progress may substitute for physician medical records.

### Multidisciplinary Surgical Preparatory Regimen

An organized multidisciplinary surgical preparatory regimen lasts at least three consecutive months meeting **all** of the criteria below. Multidisciplinary surgical preparatory regimen must include:

1. Consultation with a licensed dietician or nutritionist
2. Participation in a reduced-calorie diet program supervised by a licensed dietician or nutritionist
3. Loss of 10% of your starting body weight prior to surgery
4. A physical activity assessment prior to surgery, supervised by a licensed exercise therapist or other licensed qualified professional
5. Participation in a behavior modification program supervised by a licensed qualified professional
6. Attendance at all of the pre-surgery and postoperative surgery appointments and support group meetings

Immediately prior to the time of surgery, the prescribing physician must document that you participated in an organized multidisciplinary surgical preparatory regimen of at least three consecutive months meeting **all** of the criteria above. Your medical record documentation must show your attendance and participation in the multidisciplinary surgical preparatory regimen and post-operative support group meetings, the physician's initial assessment of your health and morbid obesity as well as documentation of your progress at the completion of the regimen. FCH reviews these medical records to preauthorize your surgery.



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## My Weight-Loss Options

In 2009, the Centers for Disease control reported that more than one third of U.S. adults and 16% of U.S. children are obese. More than 200 million Americans are overweight, obese, or morbidly obese. There are varieties of weight-loss programs that include surgical and non-surgical programs to support you in reaching a healthy weight. It is common to make a number of attempts at weight-loss only to find yourself regaining the lost weight. If this has been the case for you, a weight-loss program is something you may consider.

This pamphlet will help members and their families understand MUST's non-surgical and surgical programs, benefits and eligibility requirements.

### Weight Loss Case Management

When you are considering enrolling in a surgical or non-surgical weight loss program, the first place to start is to enroll in First Choice Health's (FCH) Case Management. The case manager is a registered nurse who will work with you and your team of healthcare providers.

Case Management nurses at First Choice Health will:

- Provide participants with free, voluntary and confidential assistance
- Assist you and your family to understand MUST's benefit requirements when considering weight loss programs

- Work with participants over the telephone to identify needs and create a plan
- Coordinate participant care with your health benefits plan, physician and other licensed providers
- Advocate for the participant to obtain the most appropriate and cost effective care
- Provide support and resources to the participant and their family

## Non-surgical Weight-loss Programs

When you need additional support to lose weight and maintain your weight-loss, MUST covers non-surgical programs for the morbidly obese participant. Enrolling in a non-surgical, medically supervised, outpatient program is available to you as long as you are benefit-eligible. You may be eligible for the program if you are:

1. Currently covered under MUST's health plan
2. Enrolled in FCH's Case Management
3. Have a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater, OR BMI between 27 and 29 plus have at least two co-morbid health conditions such as sleep apnea, medication dependent diabetes, hypertension, coronary artery disease, etc.
4. The program you select is medically supervised
5. Preauthorization for services is obtained

Your personal physician or an approved weight-loss program must submit medical record documentation to your FCH Case Manager for preauthorization. FCH will review your care plan a minimum of every six months from date of approval by FCH. To assure coverage, it is important that all your providers coordinate your care through FCH. Continued coverage is dependent upon a one to two pound weight-loss per week (24-48 pounds). Weight loss less than this will result in termination of benefits for medically supervised weight-loss.

A typical weight-loss program includes some or all of the following covered services as part of your care plan. These services include:

- Visits with licensed health care providers to support you in reaching your weight-loss goal
- Nutritional counseling

- FDA approved weight-loss medications prescribed for the management of weight-loss due to morbid obesity
- Office visits with your provider(s) and associated lab work ordered by the provider

It is your responsibility to let FCH know when you reach your weight loss goal. Once you reach your weight-loss goal, your coverage for maintenance or follow-up programs will end, even if you gain some of the weight back after you met your goal weight. If you continue in the program after you met your weight goal, you may be financially responsible for costs of the program.

### Exclusions

- Treatment for weight gain, weight reduction or weight maintenance except for treatment of Morbid Obesity
- Charges for commercial or franchise weight-loss programs (Examples: Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig)
- Charges for weight-loss surgery, except as defined under MUST's Bariatric Surgery Benefit
- Charges for nutritional foods

## Surgical Weight-loss Programs

Surgeries covered under MUST's benefit:

1. Laparoscopic Gastric Banding (Lap Band): surgeon makes a small pouch in the upper part of your stomach with an adjustable band that limits food intake.
2. Gastric Bypass (Roux-en-Y): the surgeon makes you a smaller stomach by creating a small pouch at the top of your stomach with staples or a plastic band. The smaller stomach connects to the middle section of your small intestines and part of your upper intestines. Your new smaller stomach bypasses your original stomach.

When non-surgical programs have not worked MUST covers surgical programs for the morbidly-obese member. Enrolling in a surgical, medically supervised, program is available to you as long as you are benefit-eligible. You may be eligible for the surgical program if you:

1. Have current coverage under MUST's health plan
2. Enroll in FCH's Case Management
3. Have at least a three-year history of a BMI between 35 and 39, with two co-morbid health conditions. Examples of co-morbid conditions are sleep apnea, medication dependent diabetes, hypertension, coronary artery disease, etc. OR a BMI of 40 or greater

4. Have completed growing (18 years of age or documentation of completed bone growth)
5. Show prior weight-loss attempts without successful long term weight reduction
6. Enroll and participate in either a physician-supervised nutrition and exercise program OR a multidisciplinary surgical preparatory Regimen
7. Complete a psychological evaluation by a licensed mental health professional

Your medical providers must provide documentation from your medical record that you meet all of the requirements listed above.

After successful completion of the physician-supervised nutrition and exercise program, or multidisciplinary surgical preparatory regimen, and a psychological evaluation, your healthcare team providers will need to obtain pre-authorization for surgery from your FCH Case Manager.

FCH will review all documentation your healthcare team provides, and make a determination if you meet MUST's eligibility requirements to cover the charges in connection with or related to bariatric surgery.

Please know that FCH must determine charges are medically necessary for coverage to apply.

## Bariatric Surgery Program

MUST's bariatric surgery program is medically guided to help you safely reach and maintain your ideal body weight. During the program, you will work closely with your case manager and weight-loss healthcare team before and after your surgery. The healthcare team includes doctors, nurses, nutritionist, and other licensed healthcare professionals. The program blends the expertise of a professional team with personal accountability to maintain success.

You have a choice of two types of programs that you must actively participate in, and successfully complete before your surgery is covered. Participation is important. Undergoing bariatric surgery is a big step. These two programs are to prepare you before your surgery and for your medical care after surgery.