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Obesity Surgery Center named center of excellence

The VCU Medical Center's **Obesity Surgery Center** has been designated a **Bariatric Center of Excellence** by the **Surgical Review Corporation (SRC)**, an independent company made up of surgeons and other industry professionals.

The designation is for three years — the maximum term that can be issued to an institution.

"The center of excellence initiative ultimately will improve care across the board for patients," said **Dr. James Maher**, director of the Obesity Surgery Center. "It should say to patients that these

institutions care enough about patient safety to have submitted their medical records and processes for critical review."

SRC designates Bariatric Centers of Excellence in two phases. Provisional status is granted once it determines a medical center has the necessary resources to provide safe and effective bariatric surgery. Final approval is recommended only after an on-site inspection of the hospital, resources, medical records, complication rates and overall outcomes.

In order to be considered, institutions must perform at least

125 **gastric bypass surgeries** each year; have a designated medical director and multidisciplinary care team, including a psychologist, dietitian and exercise experts; and must maintain a full complement of equipment — from operating tables to wheelchairs — suitable for morbidly obese patients.

Once designated a center of excellence, hospitals must periodically submit data to prove that quality standards are being maintained. The hospitals must undergo re-certification every one to three years.

"This validates what we've been

doing at VCU for many years," said **Jill Meador, R.N.**, bariatric nurse coordinator. "Having someone critically review our procedures and designate us as a center of excellence says we are doing things right."

SRC is an independent, not-for-profit organization founded by the **American Society for Bariatric Surgery** to establish care guidelines for gastric bypass surgery programs and to help surgeons and hospitals reach optimal levels of performance.

For more information, visit www.helpforobesity.com or call 804-828-8000.

Massey breast health oncologist receives Kohlenberg award

Dr. Mary Helen Hackney, an oncologist and member of the **Breast Health Center** at the **VCU Massey Cancer Center**, received the **2005 Sharon H. Kohlenberg Healthcare Service Award** from the **Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation (VBCF)**.

The VBCF presents this award annually to individuals who make a difference in the Commonwealth and go above and beyond the call of duty in caring for those affected by breast cancer. The award was presented by Kohlenberg's son, **Sam Goldman**, during VBCF's fall event on October 18.

Hackney serves as director of Massey's **Rural Cancer Outreach Program**, which provides oncology services to cancer patients in rural communities who have limited access to oncology care services. She logs hundreds of miles each year traveling throughout Virginia to treat these patients.

In addition to treating patients, Hackney teaches hematology/oncology at the VCU School of Medicine; works with medical students on their oncology rotations; and mentors medical residents on breast cancer care. She started her career at Massey as a resident in 1988, and joined the faculty in 1994.

Two of Hackney's colleagues at Massey, **Dr. Harry D. Bear** and **Dr. Thomas J. Smith**, earned the Kohlenberg Award previously.

The Kohlenberg Award was established in 1995, in honor of the memory of **Sharon Kohlenberg**, former director of the VCU Health System's Department of Risk Management and co-founder of the VBCF.



(left to right) Sam Goldman, Dr. Mary Helen Hackney and Larry Goldman

Following her diagnosis of breast cancer in 1990, she became an outspoken breast cancer activist until succumbing to cancer in 1993. Kohlenberg wrote a book titled "Sammy's Mommy Has Cancer," to help children deal with their sorrows, hopes and fears of a family member battling a life-threatening illness.

For more information, call 877-4-MASSEY or 804-828-5116.

Calendar

Upcoming seminars, classes and other events around the VCU Medical Center

December 6

Let's Talk Cancer

VCU Massey Cancer Center at Stony Point; 6:30 p.m.

All are welcomed to join a new monthly discussion group for cancer prevention, survivorship, research and wellness. Led by clinical psychologist. Call 804-828-8709.

January 4

Diabetic Dining Made Easy

VCU Medical Center at Stony Point; 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Learn how eating the right types of food will help keep you healthy. Menus and recipes are provided. \$35.00 per person. To register, call 804-560-8950.

January 17 & 19

Lean 'N Easy Cholesterol Lowering Diet Class

VCU Medical Center at Stony Point; Tues., 9:30-11:30 a.m. and Thurs., 7-9 p.m.

Learn how to lower your cholesterol and enjoy the food you eat. \$35.00 per person. To register, call 804-560-8955.