

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## VCU OBESITY SURGERY CENTER IS RECOGNIZED FOR HIGH-QUALITY CARE IN BARIATRIC SURGERY

### *The ASBS Designates VCU Obesity Surgery Center as a Center of Excellence*

**RICHMOND, VA – The VCU Obesity Surgery Center** announced today that it has been named an American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence. The ASBS Center of Excellence designation recognizes surgical programs with a demonstrated track record of favorable outcomes in bariatric surgery.

According to a study released in July 2005 by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the number of U.S. bariatric surgeries more than quadrupled between 1998 and 2002 – from 13,386 to 71,733. Faced with clinical evidence that the most experienced and best-run bariatric surgery programs have by far the lowest rates of complications, the ASBS Centers of Excellence program was created to recognize bariatric surgery centers that perform well and to help surgeons and hospitals continue to improve the quality and safety of care provided.

To earn a Center of Excellence designation, **The Obesity Surgery Center** underwent a series of site inspections during which all aspects of the program's surgical processes were closely examined and data on health outcomes was collected. **Dr. John Kellum and Dr. James Maher of the Obesity Surgery Center** and other centers receiving the Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence designation agree to continue to share information on clinical pathways, protocols and outcomes data.

"Due to the increasing prevalence of morbid obesity and the inherent risks and the opportunities available greatly improve the health of this patient population, we recognize the need to implement a systematic approach to improving quality," said **Dr. James Maher, Director of the Obesity Surgery Center**. "At the Obesity Surgery Center we believe that the ASBS Centers of Excellence program will serve as a catalyst, driving strong programs to get even better. We have done our part, and we urge our peers to join the effort."

Surgical Review Corporation (SRC), an organization dedicated to pursuing surgical excellence, formulates and establishes the rigorous standards with which the **VCU Obesity Surgery Center** and other Centers of Excellence must comply, thoroughly inspects and evaluates each candidate for designation, and upon review recommends approval of designation for those physicians and facilities whose practices and outcomes meet the stringent demands set forth by SRC for ASBS.

Obesity has become a significant national health issue, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reporting that 64 percent of all U.S. adults are overweight or obese. Morbid obesity is closely correlated with a number of serious conditions that severely undermine the health of overweight patients, including heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.

Bariatric surgery, when performed correctly, can help obese patients manage these conditions. By definition, surgeons with ASBS Center of Excellence designations practice only top-quality care, ensuring efficacy of the procedure with each patient to the best of their abilities.

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As a pioneering organization, designating Centers of Excellence based on top quality care and efficacious outcomes, the American Society for Bariatric Surgery, with the help of SRC, is working to align the common interests of patients, surgeons, hospitals and insurers, all of whom suffer when complications develop after surgical care.

### **About American Society for Bariatric Surgery**

The American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) is the largest society for this specialty in the world. Founded in 1983, foremost American surgeons have formed the society's leadership and have established an excellent organization with educational and support programs for surgeons and allied health professionals. The purpose of the society is to advance the art and science of bariatric surgery by continued encouragement of its members to: pursue investigations in both the clinic and the laboratory; interchange ideas, information and experience pertaining to bariatric surgery; promote guidelines for ethical patient selection and care; develop educational programs for physicians, paramedical persons, and lay people; and promote outcome studies and quality assurance. For more information about ASBS, please visit [www.asbs.org](http://www.asbs.org).

### **About Surgical Review Corporation**

Surgical Review Corporation (SRC) is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to surgical excellence. SRC's mission is to promote the delivery of surgical care with the highest levels of efficacy, efficiency, and safety possible. For more information about SRC or to download a Center of Excellence application, please visit [www.surgicalreview.org](http://www.surgicalreview.org).

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