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Natividad Medical Center’s Bariatric Surgery Program Receives Level II Accreditation

Natividad Medical Center (NMC) is pleased to announce the completion of a successful accreditation survey by the American College of Surgeons on September 29, 2011. This designation identifies NMC as a center of excellence in the provision of bariatric surgery.

In order to achieve this status, an organization must not only be able to provide bariatric surgery, but must also provide the wide range of ancillary services necessary to ensure successful outcomes for patients. Some of these services include psychological support, dietary support and counseling, post-operative support groups, pre-operative informational sessions, bariatric capable equipment, staff that are trained in the needs and provision of care to bariatric patients, and clinical pathways to ensure that bariatric patients are receiving all the necessary care and treatment to make their journey a successful one.

This is an important milestone for NMC’s bariatric surgery program and is a stepping stone towards higher levels of accreditation.
In June 2009, NMC, led by Dr. Alexander Di Stante, Service Director for Surgery, began performing bariatric surgery procedures.

Initially, NMC provided laparoscopic banding as a surgical adjunct to patient’s weight loss goals. This program has expanded to include laparoscopic Roux-en-Y and laparoscopic gastric bypass procedures. The addition of these two procedures allows patients to choose which surgical weight loss options best suits their particular needs.

As the bariatric surgery program has grown at NMC, so has the awareness that it should be supplemented and supported through accreditation as a center of excellence, culminating in the accreditation the hospital has now been awarded.

The provision of bariatric surgery highlights NMC’s mission to continually improve the health status of the people of Monterey County. By assisting patients in their weight loss, NMC is also helping them to reduce or eliminate many of the co-morbidities associated with obesity such as hypertension and diabetes.

Getting the Word Out About the Benefits of Saving for Retirement

Are you ready for retirement? The week of October 16th is National Save for Retirement Week, a time to promote employee savings, raise public awareness of the various tax-preferred retirement vehicles available to workers and encourage personal financial literacy.

Statistics tell us that more than half of American workers have not calculated how much money they will need to save for retirement and that Social Security and pensions may only account for 58% of a person’s income in retirement.

"We understand the importance of Monterey County employees being financially secure in retirement,” explains Dean Carothers, a Child Support Services staff member and Vice Chair of the Monterey County 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. “Retired county employees can positively impact the community economically both with their volunteer time and as contributing citizens, and they provide stability as studies indicate many people stay in their community once retired.”

National Save for Retirement Week is a U.S. Senate-endorsed event, formally calling on employers to promote the benefits of saving for retirement and encourage employees to take full advantage of employer-sponsored plans. It is hoped that during this week, those in the workforce take time to educate themselves on the latest ways to improve savings and review their plans for retirement.
The Monterey County 457 Deferred Compensation Plan is available to all Monterey County employees as a supplemental savings vehicle for their retirement. For more information about Deferred Compensation, call Great-West Retirement Representative Ed Lopez at 831-682-0014.

Monterey County is also member of NAGDCA, the National Association of Government Defined Contribution Administrators, an organization that promotes initiatives to support and improve retirement plans. NAGDCA has useful facts and savings information at its website:  http://www.nagdca.org/

Counting Down the Days to the November Election

The November General Election is less than a month away. At the Elections Department, current activities surround completion of the required Logic and Accuracy testing, cleaning and organizing materials for the polling places, and processing voter registration forms and applications for vote by mail ballots for eligible voters.

Early Voting: Monday, October 10th marked the first day of Early Voting. Vote by mail ballots will be available at the Elections’ office in Salinas for those who wish to obtain a ballot in person. One AVC Edge touch-screen voting machine available to voters to meet state and federal law with regard to voters with sight and mobility impairments.

Election Mail: This week, the Department will begin to mail the Monterey County Voter Guide and official vote by mail ballots for the permanent and mail ballot precinct voters. Approximately 210,000 pieces will hit the mail stream, including 80,000 official vote by mail ballots and 130,000 local voter guides containing important information about the election, including the voter’s assigned polling place location.

Poll Workers/Polling Places: The Department is busy reviewing applications and gathering data for placing poll workers and mailing out training class schedules and Election Day assignment notification letters. This includes the list of people that the Department places on reserve to cover for last minute cancellations.

As a reminder, there were just a few polling places relocated for the November 8th election. Affected precincts are relocated due to construction projects at the Cesar Chavez Library, a homeowner no longer able to provide a polling place in Marina, and a move from the Salinas City School District Office to Roosevelt School as the main District Office can no longer accommodate activities for any outside organization.