Bariatric Survey Finds An Increase In Patient Admissions

/PRNewswire/ -- Novation, the leading health care supply contracting company, announces the release of its 2011 Bariatric Report, a nationwide survey of VHA Inc. and UHC member hospitals. The results confirm that while hospitals continue to see an increase in morbidly obese patients, hospitals are also expanding the services, supplies and training needed to serve this patient population.

Of the responding facilities, 58 percent of the respondents saw an increase in admissions of morbidly obese patients in the past 18 months.

"These hospitals have continued to see a rise in admissions of obese patients and treatment costs since our last survey in June 2010," said Cathy Denning, vice president, sourcing operations at Novation. "At the same time, they are also putting the resources and training in place to provide quality care for the specific needs of these patients."

Key Findings:

- 41% of the respondents indicate that they have bariatric surgery programs in their facilities. Of those, 94% of the respondents indicate that their facilities offer gastric banding surgery. 78% of the respondents have seen an increase in the number of bariatric-related reconstructive surgeries over the last 18 months.
- When asked about bariatric outpatient programs in member facilities, 53% have a fitness program in their facilities, 61% have a weight loss program and 62% have a counseling program.
- When asked whether they rent or purchase equipment to accommodate morbidly obese patients, the majority of the member facilities purchased most types of bariatric equipment, and almost half of respondents (48 rented/leased beds.
- Beds also account for the highest total costs and/or the greatest increase in bariatric product spending at member facilities.
- 61% of the respondents indicate that their facilities provide special meals/supplements for morbidly obese patients.
- 29% of the respondents indicate that in the past year, they invested in the physical renovation for their facilities to accommodate morbidly obese

patients. The median estimated cost of all morbidly obese-related renovations is $128,000.

- When asked about workplace injuries in the past year related to caring for morbidly obese patients, 49% of the respondents have seen an increase while 51% have seen a decrease.

- Of the 51% of the respondents who have seen a decrease in workplace injuries, 81% of them believe that it was due to purchasing equipment or offering training programs.

"Currently, Novation offers a comprehensive portfolio of the most widely used bariatric products to support member hospitals, and we continue to enhance those offerings," said Denning. "While the treatment costs for bariatric care increase, hospitals also face the financial pressures of the economy and reduced reimbursement. Because of this, it is more important than ever that we help the hospitals we serve continue to lower their supply costs while providing high quality care."

Obesity is a leading preventable cause of death worldwide and authorities view it as one of the most serious public health problems of the 21st century. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, research has shown that as weight increases to reach the levels referred to as "overweight" and "obesity," the risks for conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes also increase. Additionally, the associated health problems and treatment services have a significant economic impact on the U.S. health care system.

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