The American Society for Bariatric Surgery (ASBS) has named Pomerado Hospital as a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence – only three other hospitals in San Diego County have earned this distinction. The ASBS Center of Excellence designation recognizes surgical programs with a demonstrated track record of favorable outcomes in bariatric surgery.

To earn a Center of Excellence designation, Pomerado Hospital underwent a comprehensive outcomes review and on-site inspection. All aspects of the surgical process and health outcomes were examined. Pomerado Hospital, along with other ASBS Centers of Excellence agree to pool and share information on clinical pathways, protocols and outcomes. Data sharing allows bariatric surgery programs to develop best practice pathways to further refine their care.

“We approach clinically severe obesity as a genetically based condition which is amplified by a variety of social, psychological, dietary, and environmental factors,” says Dr. Callery, medical director of the bariatric surgery program. “Diet, exercise, and counseling programs alone are ineffective for many patients. At Pomerado Hospital we believe that the ASBS Centers of Excellence program will serve as a catalyst, driving strong programs to improve our service.”

According to a study released in July 2005 by the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality, the number of 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 Center of Excellence program was created to recognize bariatric surgery centers that perform exceptionally well. The program also encourages surgeons and hospitals to work together to improve the quality and safety of care provided.

**Program Benefits**

As a Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence (BSCOE), the center promotes safety and advocacy by offering comprehensive services to its patients and performing data tracking and analyses. A program's designation publicly honors it as being the best of the best. In becoming a BSCOE, the program has held itself up to some of the highest standards in the industry. The
designation is indicative of the centers comprehensive commitment to a high level of bariatric care.

**Bariatric Surgery Facts**

- According to the National Institute of Health, bariatric surgery is the only effective therapy for morbid obesity and its complications. A variety of surgical procedures can promote the weight loss that leads to full remission of many associated illnesses such as diabetes, asthma, cardio pulmonary failure, infertility and stress incontinence
  - On average patients who undergo bariatric surgery lose and keep half or more of their excess weight
  - Only patients considered morbidly obese, having a body mass index of at least 40, or those with debilitating co-morbidities and a body mass index of at least 35 are candidates for bariatric surgery
  - Surgical options are a last resort for morbidly obese patients
  - Bariatric surgery is not a quick fix; surgery is most effective when paired with such life-style changes as improved diet and exercise. Patients are encouraged to deal with emotional and psychological issues that may have contributed to their condition
  - While complications are possible after any surgery, the incidence of these complications that occur at ASBS Bariatric Surgery Centers of Excellence is extremely low