

NEWS RELEASE



DAMERON HOSPITAL RECOGNIZED FOR QUALITY BARIATRIC SURGERY

STOCKTON, CA (September 29, 2015) – Dameron Hospital has been recognized by Blue Shield of California as a Blue Distinction® Center in bariatric surgery as part of the Blue Distinction® Centers for Specialty Care program. Blue Distinction Centers are nationally designated healthcare facilities shown to deliver quality specialty care, based on objective measures that were developed with input from the medical community, for patient safety and better health outcomes.

To receive a Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery designation, a healthcare facility must demonstrate success in meeting patient safety as well as bariatric-specific quality measures, including complications and readmissions, for gastric stapling and/or gastric banding. A healthcare facility must also have earned national accreditations at both the facility level and the bariatric care-specific level.

According to Dameron Hospital President and Chief Executive Officer Lorraine Auerbach, this designation is another validation of the excellent quality of the hospital's programs and services, which includes the bariatric surgery program. Dameron Hospital's bariatrics program has also been recognized by the American College of Surgeons as an accredited bariatric center.

"Dameron Hospital is proud to be recognized by Blue Shield of California for meeting the rigorous selection criteria for bariatric surgery set by the Blue Distinction Centers for Specialty Care program," said Mrs. Auerbach. "We actively partner with our physicians to develop specialty care programs that deliver superior outcomes for our patients. As part of our long-standing commitment to the community, we want to deliver world-class health care to residents right here where they live and work."

Bariatric surgeries are among the most common elective surgeries in the U.S. There were 179,000 bariatric surgeries performed in 2013, according to the American Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, and the average cost is more than \$28,000 per episode, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

"Dameron Hospital has been consistently increasing its volume of bariatric procedures and the number of participants in its weight loss program," said Dameron Hospital Vice President of Medical Affairs and Chief Medical Officer Brad Reinke, MD. "In health care, performing a high volume of specific surgical procedures strengthens clinical expertise in that area. Research shows that facilities designated as Blue Distinction Centers demonstrate better quality and improved outcomes for patients compared with their peers."

“Many of our patients have struggled with weight issues throughout their lives,” said Patrick Coates, MD, Lead Bariatric Surgeon for Dameron Hospital. “We help them successfully overcome this challenge with a combination of weight loss surgery and a program to help them make lifestyle choices that sustain their optimal weight. The Dameron Bariatric Program provides both of these elements very effectively. Our patients love the results and tell us how much it’s improved their quality of life.”

Since 2006, the Blue Distinction Centers for Specialty Care program has helped patients find quality providers for their specialty care needs in the areas of bariatric surgery, cardiac care, complex and rare cancers, knee and hip replacements, spine surgery, and transplants while encouraging healthcare professionals to improve the care they deliver. For more information about the program and for a complete listing of the designated facilities, please visit www.bcbs.com/bluedistinction.

About Blue Distinction Centers

Blue Distinction Centers (BDC) met overall quality measures for patient safety and outcomes, developed with input from the medical community. Blue Distinction Centers+ (BDC+) also met cost measures that address consumers’ need for affordable healthcare. Individual outcomes may vary. National criteria is displayed on www.bcbs.com. A Local Blue Plan may require additional criteria for facilities located in its own service area. For details on Local Blue Plan Criteria, a provider’s in-network status, or your own policy’s coverage, contact your Local Blue Plan. Each facility’s cost of care is evaluated using data from its Local Blue Plan. Facilities in CA, ID, NY, PA, and WA may lie in two Local Blue Plans’ areas, resulting in two evaluations for cost of care; and their own Local Blue Plans decide whether one or both cost of care evaluation(s) must meet BDC+ national criteria. Neither Blue Cross Blue Shield Association nor any Blue Plans are responsible for damages or non-covered charges resulting from Blue Distinction or other provider finder information or care received from Blue Distinction or other providers.

About Dameron Hospital

Dameron Hospital is a fully accredited, non-profit, 200+ bed community hospital providing acute and tertiary level care to San Joaquin County residents and is a designated heart attack receiving center for San Joaquin County. Dameron has been recognized nationally and statewide for the quality of many of its services and programs, including designation from HealthGrades® for Five Star Rated Knee Replacements and selection as a Blue Shield of California Blue Distinction Center for Bariatric Surgery. Dameron has also been recognized as a Top Performer for its Quality Metrics by the Joint Commission. Dameron’s services include Cardiology and Cardiac Surgery, Orthopedics, Bariatric Surgery, Neonatal ICU, Maternal and Child Care as well as general acute care, Emergency and Intensive Care Services. Dameron also provides primary care in its onsite Ambulatory Care Center.