

2009

# Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program Turns a Life Around

Follow this and additional works at: <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss>

 Part of the [Surgery Commons](#)

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you](#)

### Recommended Citation

(2009) "Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program Turns a Life Around," *Jefferson Surgical Solutions*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.  
Available at: <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss/vol4/iss2/2>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Jefferson Digital Commons. The Jefferson Digital Commons is a service of Thomas Jefferson University's [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#). The Commons is a showcase for Jefferson books and journals, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, unique historical collections from the University archives, and teaching tools. The Jefferson Digital Commons allows researchers and interested readers anywhere in the world to learn about and keep up to date with Jefferson scholarship. This article has been accepted for inclusion in *Jefferson Surgical Solutions* by an authorized administrator of the Jefferson Digital Commons. For more information, please contact: [JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu](mailto:JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu).

---

## Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program Turns a Life Around

For Josephine Lacaba, struggling with her weight had been a lifelong endeavor. “I’ve tried everything,” she says. For years, her primary care physician and endocrinologist managed her diabetes and blood pressure. Despite these efforts, she continued to gain weight, and it became clear that, at 49 years of age, it was time for more dramatic action. Her nephrologist James Burke, MD, suggested she meet with David Tichansky, MD, Director of the Jefferson Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program, about weight loss surgery. She was worried about possible complications, but Dr. Burke and her endocrinologist Serge Jabbour, MD, expressed concern that the alternative was to go on dialysis— a measure that generally cannot be reversed once it begins. She agreed to make the appointment.

She found great relief when Dr. Tichansky explained the details of the gastric bypass procedure and the life long support the program offered. Having come to the U.S. from the Philippines in 1988, English is her second language, and she appreciated how clearly and simply Dr. Tichansky explained the details to her. The Jefferson program is entirely laparoscopic, which means rather than a large incision, a series of small incisions are used to perform the bypass, which dramatically reduces the portions of food a person consumes. Ms. Lacaba decided that this was a step she was willing to take, for the sake of her health, and also of her husband (of nineteen years) and her eight-yearold son.

“In order to promote safety and likelihood of good outcomes,” says Dr. Tichansky, “we have all of our patients undergo extensive evaluations, since a significant portion of our patients have undiagnosed issues.” Ms. Lacaba underwent the procedure in early June and was in the hospital only three days. At her first follow-up endocrinology appointment three weeks post-surgery, she was delighted to learn that her diabetes had been

---

entirely cured, and she could also go off her blood pressure medication completely. Within 30 days she had shed 20 pounds; within two months she had lost 40, and by the three month anniversary she was 50 pounds lighter.

“I was amazed,” she says. “I’m really cured. I’m so happy to not have to worry about this. My chest pains are also gone, and I don’t get tired like I did before.”

She is extremely grateful for the active involvement of the comprehensive team the Jefferson program offers: Alise Kuhl, CRNP-BC, the Program Coordinator, and Michelle Moon, the dietitian, saw her at every visit and helped her know what to expect; Internist Janine Kyrillos, MD, a team member that makes the program unique, helps patients with any medical issues that arise; and Saidah Williamson handles the complex insurance issues.

“My family is so happy for me,” Ms. Lacaba says with a smile. “My husband teases me that he doesn’t have to take care of my medical problems anymore, and my son has learned a lot about diet and nutrition through all of this. He encourages me to exercise now, and he talks about us all staying healthy.”

For more information about Bariatric Surgery visit: <http://www.jeffersonhospital.org/bariatric>

# Surgical Solutions

## Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program Turns a Life Around

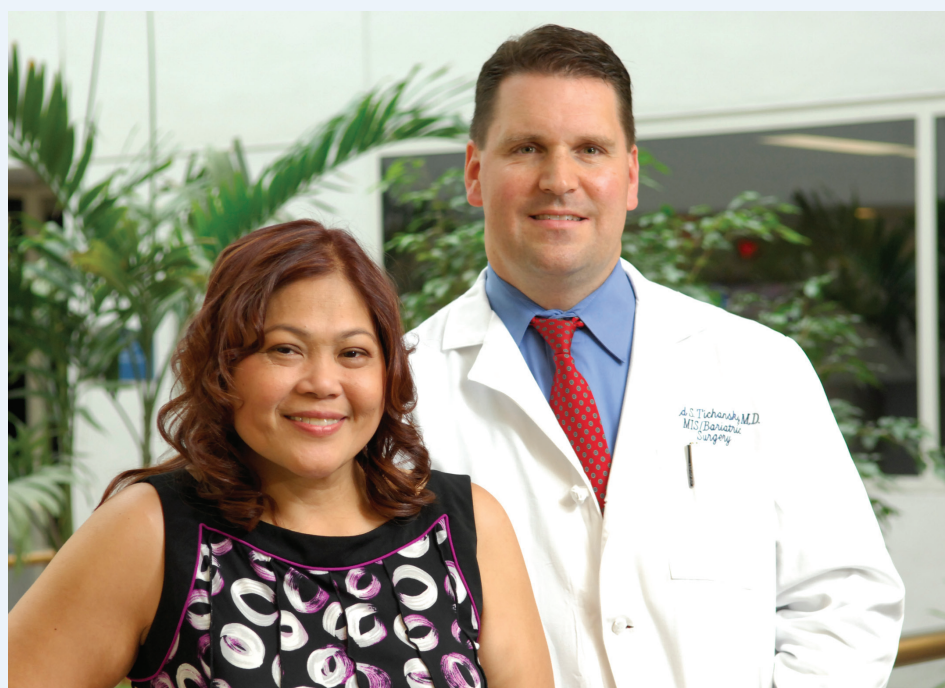
For Josephine Lacaba, struggling with her weight had been a lifelong endeavor. "I've tried everything," she says. For years, her primary care physician and endocrinologist managed her diabetes and blood pressure. Despite these efforts, she continued to gain weight, and it became clear that, at 49 years of age, it was time for more dramatic action. Her nephrologist James Burke, MD, suggested she meet with David Tichansky, MD, Director of the Jefferson Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program, about weight loss surgery. She was worried about possible complications, but Dr. Burke and her endocrinologist Serge Jabbour, MD, expressed concern that the alternative was to go on dialysis—a measure that generally cannot be reversed once it begins. She agreed to make the appointment.

She found great relief when Dr. Tichansky explained the details of the gastric bypass procedure and the life long support the program offered. Having come to the U.S. from the Philippines in 1988, English is her second language, and she appreciated how clearly and simply Dr. Tichansky explained the details to her. The Jefferson program is entirely laparoscopic, which means rather than a large incision, a series

*"I'm really cured...  
 My chest pains are also  
 gone, and I don't get  
 tired like I did before."*

of small incisions are used to perform the bypass, which dramatically reduces the portions of food a person consumes. Ms. Lacaba decided that this was a step she was willing to take, for the sake of her health, and also of her husband (of nineteen years) and her eight-year-old son.

"In order to promote safety and likelihood of good outcomes," says



**Josephine Lacaba, 50 pounds lighter and diabetes-free, is one of dozens of success stories in the new Jefferson Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program, founded by David Tichansky, MD in 2008.**

Dr. Tichansky, "we have all of our patients undergo extensive evaluations, since a significant portion of our patients have undiagnosed issues."

Ms. Lacaba underwent the procedure in early June and was in the hospital only three days. At her first follow-up endocrinology appointment three weeks post-surgery, she was delighted to learn that her diabetes had been entirely cured, and she could also go off her blood pressure medication completely. Within 30 days she had shed 20 pounds; within two months she had lost 40, and by the three month anniversary she was 50 pounds lighter.

"I was amazed," she says. "I'm really cured. I'm so happy to not have to worry about this. My chest pains are also gone, and I don't get tired like I did before." She is extremely grateful for the active involvement of the comprehensive team

the Jefferson program offers: Alise Kuhl, CRNP-BC, the Program Coordinator, and Michelle Moon, the dietitian, saw her at every visit and helped her know what to expect; Internist Janine Kyrillos, MD, a team member that makes the program unique, helps patients with any medical issues that arise; and Saidah Williamson handles the complex insurance issues.

"My family is so happy for me," Ms. Lacaba says with a smile. "My husband teases me that he doesn't have to take care of my medical problems anymore, and my son has learned a lot about diet and nutrition through all of this. He encourages me to exercise now, and he talks about us all staying healthy."

For more information about Bariatric Surgery visit:  
[www.jeffersonhospital.org/bariatric](http://www.jeffersonhospital.org/bariatric)

### The Surgeon Speaks

I joined the Department of Surgery in 2008 to create the new Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program which offers a range of fully laparoscopic procedures – including gastric bypass and gastric banding – to help morbidly obese individuals begin the journey to healthier lives. The focus of my prior experience at the University of Tennessee was with procedures that are entirely laparoscopic. Thus, the procedures are less invasive, so patients do better and recover more quickly.

Gastric bypass is considered the "gold standard" operation for weight loss. Performed since the 1960s, it is the most common weight-loss procedure in the United States and around the world. The bypass we perform at Jefferson only bypasses approximately one-third of the intestinal tract, leaving the last two-thirds to be the "common limb," which absorbs food relatively normally. The amount of malabsorption caused by the bypass that we perform is minimal and easily overcome from a nutritional standpoint by taking a few over-the-counter supplements every day. By eating less and not fully absorbing calories in food, most people will lose 60–70 percent of their excess body weight with this procedure.

The support of the hospital and the Department Chair, Charles Yeo, MD, has enabled us to achieve great results in a small amount of time. Since January 2009 my bariatric surgery colleague Bernadette Profeta, MD and I have performed close to 80 procedures, which is an impressive volume for a young program.

This all contributes to being able to make a difference in the lives of patients like Josephine Lacaba. I feel extremely lucky to work in an area of medicine in which we can actually reverse chronic, life-threatening conditions. It's very rewarding work—the patients are genuinely grateful for our help.

**David Tichansky, MD, FACS**  
 Director, Jefferson Bariatric and Metabolic Surgery Program

## In this issue

*Dr. Yeo's Overview*  
 Page 2

*Clinical Integration*  
*Ventricular Assist*  
*Device – Page 2*

*Changing Lives Through*  
*Research New Cancer*  
*Research – Page 3*

*On the Job*  
*Meet Sharon Molotsky, RN, BSN,*  
*CCRC – Page 3*