

Miriam receives \$1.3M NIH bariatric surgery grant

Data from the three-year study will focus on understanding how to help maximize weight loss using mobile technology

PROVIDENCE – The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases (NIDDK) – part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) – has awarded a \$1.3 million research project grant to The Miriam Hospital and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center to use advanced monitoring technology to examine behavioral, psychosocial and environmental predictors of weight loss following bariatric surgery.

"Very little is known about why some people are more successful than others at keeping weight off after having bariatric surgery," said **DALE BOND, PhD**, lead researcher and faculty in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at The Miriam Hospital's Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center. "Behavioral factors are thought to be very influential, but guidelines for behavior changes among bariatric surgery patients are often vague and not well supported by scientific research. Our goal is to collect data to improve behavioral guidelines and help increase weight loss after bariatric surgery."

In this study, wristwatch-like sensor devices and smartphones will be used to measure factors such as eating and physical activity behavior, mood, hunger and cravings in approximately 100 bariatric surgery patients at the Miriam Hospital and also Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a second data collection site for the study. Patients, who will be recruited beginning in early 2016, will be followed before surgery and four times over the year after surgery. Researchers will collect information about environmental factors, such as foods available to patients and support from family and friends, to assess which factors predict weight loss.

"The study is exciting because this could lead to improved behavioral guidelines and new behavioral treatments, strategies and tools to maximize weight loss after bariatric surgery," said **GRAHAM THOMAS, PhD**, also a lead researcher on the study and faculty in the Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at The Miriam Hospital's Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center.

This project is an extension of existing research Bond and Thomas have conducted using real-time data collection methodologies to analyze weight-related behaviors associated with bariatric surgery. That includes Bond's study of physical activity and sedentary behavior and Thomas' use of mobile health (mHealth) technology to measure and intervene on behaviors in real time.

"Not enough research has been conducted on behavioral, psychological, and environmental predictors of weight loss after bariatric surgery," added Bond. "This study will help to fill the gap using a unique and highly innovative mobile health platform combining sensor technology with a smartphone-based, self-reporting tool to measure behavioral, psychological and environmental predictors of weight loss continuously – in real time – in the patient's natural environment."

"Bariatric surgery is a powerful tool for weight loss," said **SIVA VITHIANANTHAN, MD**, chief of minimally invasive and bariatric surgery at The Center for Bariatric Surgery, a program of Rhode Island and The Miriam Hospitals, also a researcher on the study. "By making key behavior changes, it may be possible for patients to get the greatest health benefit – and at the same time – we may have more information to better inform patients about steps they can take to boost weight loss after bariatric surgery."

In addition to their primary affiliation at The Miriam Hospital, Bond and Thomas are, respectively, associate professor and assistant professor of psychiatry and human behavior at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. ♦

RIQI receives \$8.3M Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative Award

Statewide collaborative will join federal government and other partners in supporting large-scale health care transformation among clinician practices

PROVIDENCE – The Rhode Island Quality Institute (RIQI) is one of 39 health care collaborative networks selected to participate in the Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative, announced recently by Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia M. Burwell. RIQI will receive up to \$8.3M over four years to provide technical assistance to help equip clinicians in Rhode Island with tools, information, and network support needed to improve quality of care, increase patients' access to information, and spend health care dollars more wisely.

As a Practice Transformation Network, Rhode Island Quality Institute will support 1,500 clinicians to expand their quality improvement capacity, learn from one another, and achieve common goals of improved care, better health, and reduced cost. The network will provide practice transformation assistance, care coordination tools and services, and performance measurement, reporting and evaluation to help participating clinicians meet the initiative's phases of transformation and associated milestones, clinical and operational results.

"This four-year award will allow us to significantly strengthen and expand the support we've been able to offer providers through RIQI's Regional Extension Center (RIREC) and to lever CurrentCare's data sharing capabilities to achieve the triple aim of better health, better health-care and lower per capita costs," said **LAURA ADAMS**, President and CEO, RIQI. "Moving into new payment models that reward value and not volume is extremely challenging for providers. We're delighted to be able to offer them the opportunity to be supported by a national network of experts in cooperation with local 'boots on the ground' assistance."

For more information on the Transforming Clinical Practice Initiative, visit: <http://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/Transforming-Clinical-Practices/> ♦