

## Design as a Critical Tool in Bariatric Patient Care

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### Abstract

Both men and women in the United States are roughly an inch taller and 25 pounds heavier than they were in 1960, says the National Center for Health Statistics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. An increasing number are also overweight or obese. In fact, obesity has become an alarming epidemic with enormous implications for our health care system. A critical concern is the ability to care physically and emotionally for this segment of the patient population. Respecting patient dignity and delivering optimum clinical care are primary issues, as are establishing procedures for safeguarding the health and well-being of these patients and their caregivers. Design is a critical tool in the care of and the improved long-term clinical outcomes for bariatric patients; success mandates a three-prong approach to the design process: appropriate facilities and space, proper equipment and furnishings, and training and standardized care protocols. Together, these components ensure the ability of a health care provider to adequately care for all patients—including this newest and rapidly growing patient segment—with equality and dignity.

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**Abbreviations:** (BMI) body mass index, (NHANES) National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys

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