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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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### **CALIFORNIA RELEASES FIRST REPORT ON BARIATRIC SURGERIES**

SACRAMENTO –The number of people undergoing weight reduction surgery at California hospitals rose nearly seven percent from 2005 to 2009, while mortality rates during that time remained very low, according to a brief released today by the Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development (OSHPD).

“Trends in Bariatric Surgery in California Hospitals, 2005-2009” examines hospitalization data for the five main types of bariatric surgery and examines trends in the types of people getting surgery, the safety of the procedures, and the number of surgeries performed at individual hospitals.

Obesity is a critical public health concern, contributing to serious health conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease and premature death. With nearly a quarter of Californians categorized as obese, and the trend for morbid obesity rising, a growing number of individuals will seek surgical interventions to manage health-threatening weight problems. The greater availability, affordability (through insurance coverage), and increasing popularity of some procedures has prompted the state to take a closer look, focusing on patient characteristics, cost, and the safety of these procedures.

"Californians should discuss all options for weight loss with their physicians to determine the most appropriate course of care," said OSHPD Acting Director Stephanie Clendenin. "If the decision is made to have bariatric surgery, the patient can consult this report for information on the number of procedures performed at particular hospitals and the statewide outcomes associated with each particular surgery before making a final decision."

Findings from the report include:

- In 2009, approximately 13,500 bariatric surgeries were performed in 94 California hospitals.
- Approximately 13% of patients experienced complications following bariatric surgery.
- Deaths within 30 days following bariatric surgery were quite rare, while hospital readmissions within 30 days following surgery were much more common.
- Open surgical approaches to weight loss are being replaced by less invasive procedures.
- Shorter hospital stays for bariatric surgery patients did not result in more readmissions.



- Hospitals vary considerably in the types of procedures they perform most often, suggesting specialization in these procedures.

The California Department of Public Health warns, however, that the procedure should be a last resort. Bariatric surgery may be recommended for very obese individuals in order to reduce complications related to obesity; however, it is an expensive and sometimes risky procedure that does not address the fundamental reason that leads individuals to such a high level of obesity and need for surgery.

OSHPD is committed to “Equitable Healthcare Accessibility for California.” OSHPD analyzes and supports the State’s healthcare infrastructure, promoting medical care transparency for Californians. OSHPD also supports a diverse and culturally competent workforce, ensures safety of buildings used to provide healthcare, insures loans to develop healthcare facilities and facilitates development of a sustained capacity for communities to address their healthcare concerns.

“Trends in Bariatric Surgery in California Hospitals, 2005 to 2009” can be accessed at [www.oshpd.ca.gov](http://www.oshpd.ca.gov)