

M.D. insists “If we can gain weight, we can lose it.” Lives change at Tidewater Bariatrics

BY JOANNA ENDERLIN

It was less than a year ago when Hank Miller realized he would have to save his own life.

The Chesapeake resident's pain management specialist blamed his sleep problems for his chronic pain. His sleep specialist blamed his pain for his chronic sleep problems. His medication count was up to 13 different prescriptions. He was losing the battle to get well.

Not only was he getting sicker, he couldn't even make it to the mailbox and back on his three acre property without paying dearly in pain for days to come.

Hank's doctors agreed on only one thing in the two years he sought relief from his suffering. Almost as an aside, both specialists mentioned that losing weight might not be a bad idea.

On December 7, 2007, Hank Miller walked through the doors of Tidewater Bariatrics.

Ten months and almost 100 pounds later, Hank Miller is a changed man.

He has made something of a gratitude list of 15 ways in which his life is now the life he knew he was intended to enjoy. “My wife and I are more in love than ever!” he exclaims. His kids are happier. He spends at least an hour a day at the gym and recently logged a record week of working off 6,600 calories. He has given away all his “fat” clothes and added a half-marathon to the races he runs these days.

Most amazing of all is that his daily medication count is down—all the way down. “From 13 different prescriptions to zero,” he says.

“I used to see people doing stuff and I'd think I could never do that. It's the biggest lie ever,” Hank says, “I can do anything I want.”

Margaret Gaglione, M.D., the founder and Medical Director of Tidewater Bariatrics, located at 1413 Kempsville Road in Chesapeake, shares Hank's joy when discussing her patient's abilities. “There is no reason that people can't succeed,” she says. “If we can gain weight, we can lose it.”

Since opening in April of last year, Tidewater Bariatrics reports that collectively their patients have lost more than 7,500 pounds and have



Hank Miller, before and after. Almost 100 pounds later he went from 13 to zero medications.

been able to discontinue using as many as 88 prescription medications.

Dr. Gaglione's patients experienced this success without the use of surgery.

Tidewater Bariatrics specializes in the medical treatment of overweight and obese patients. Weight management is often the most direct route back to health for those suffering from diabetes, hypertension, erectile dysfunction, heart disease, sleep apnea and many other conditions. Obesity is linked to cancer and is also part of the vicious cycle of many depressive disorders.

While exercise plays a major role in weight maintenance, Dr. Gaglione points out that expecting exercise alone to manage our weight is unreasonable. “A number one meal at McDonalds is 1,300 calories,” she says, “That's 13 miles of walking.” It's this kind of knowledge the staff at Tidewater Bariatrics shares with patients to empower their food choices. “With our program, our patients rarely complain of being hungry,” Dr. Gaglione says.

Tidewater Bariatrics develops an individualized program that meets each patient's weight loss needs and goals. For most patients, the first visit is a medical assessment including initial laboratory work, EKG, body composition analysis and a complete health history. Dr. Gaglione reviews this collected information to develop a custom weight loss plan. Patients then visit the clinic weekly for their medical appointment and for an educational class.

Those patients seeking rapid but safe results to lose 30-60 pounds or more start their nutrition recovery with the clinic's “Decision Free Diet™.” Tidewater Bariatrics features HMR®, the choice meal replacement system used by top hospitals, universities and medical centers for the past 25 years.

Next, patients enter the Transition Phase, which adds the reintroduction of other foods. This phase is where nutrition meets continued education and support in order to insure life-long behavioral changes in the way patients think about and use food.

Patients then progress into the Maintenance Phase, which adds “real world” strategies to insure continued success.

Dr. Gaglione also prescribes medication and nutritional supplements if and when these needs arise.

Not all patients require meal replacements. Some patients reach their weight loss goal using the Tidewater Bariatrics Food Guide and learning new ways to think about nutrition. “We teach patients to make wise choices,” Dr. Gaglione says. “Most food choices are made without considering the real costs. It's like going to a store and buying things with no idea of the cost until months later when the bill arrives. Our patients do the work. We provide the roadmap.”

Even Tidewater Bariatric's office and website (www.tidewaterbariatrics.com) are designed not only for patient information but also for patient support.

The waiting room is open and airy and bright and everything about the practice is geared toward making patients comfortable, building relationships, and boosting confidence. The entire staff knows their patients. Dr. Gaglione believes that this “team” approach is vital to achieving success.



Tidewater Bariatrics Team (from left): Jackie Kassen, Dr. Margaret Gaglione, Melissa Baldi, Lee Ann Mandaleris, Bobby Jesse, Stephanie Swider, Jennifer Lozano, Adrian Hicks. (Not pictured: David Collins, Business Manager.)

While most insurance companies have yet to support medical obesity treatment, Dr. Gaglione's office will provide a superbill for the medical exam, laboratory work and EKG that patients can use to seek reimbursement. Dr. Gaglione points out that many of her patients have reported saving money by losing weight at Tidewater Bariatrics because they are no longer eating out as frequently nor needing to take as much medication.

“There is so much more to life after losing weight.”

~ Dr. Margaret Gaglione

Dr. Gaglione is a Board Certified Internal Medicine Physician, a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, a member of the American Society of Bariatric Physicians. She is a graduate of Le Moyne College and the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine. Her Internal Medicine Residency was spent at the Naval Medical Center in Portsmouth where she was Chief of Residents during her first staff year. She is an Associate Professor of Medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland and has successfully completed the American Board of Bariatric Medicine's written and oral examinations toward board certification. Nine peer reviewed publications on medical education and teaching have been published in her name.

Dr. Gaglione clearly has the credentials for her chosen area of expertise, but it is her heart that has made Tidewater Bariatrics a success, “This work is so rewarding,” she says, “I felt great joy when a patient told me she could finally wear her wedding ring for the first time in seven years. There is so much more to life after losing weight. I love watching my patients' spirits blossom.”



Tidewater Bariatrics
An Internist Specializing in Medical Weight Loss

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