

I am a general internist and I have been involved with bariatric surgery for many years.

When I was living in New Orleans, Dr. Tom Lavin and I were cofounders of Surgical Specialists of Louisiana. That group now does over fifteen hundred bariatric surgical procedures per year and they are at the forefront of innovative research in endoscopic bariatric surgery. Since moving to Ottawa, I have not been directly attached to a bariatric surgical program, but I follow a large number of bariatric surgical patients.

One of the major problems that the bariatric surgical community runs into is the perception that bariatric surgery is unaffordable for our health care system. The medical costs of treating a class three obese diabetic patient are enormous in terms of drug costs, medical visits and consultations, lab and imaging studies. They are so high that in fact bariatric surgical procedures pay for themselves in less than one year.

I have a presentation that documents, the continuing and unrelenting increase in the prevalence of obesity, the consequent explosion in the prevalence of diabetes and other obesity related comorbidities, the costs of treating those conditions and the dramatic reduction of those costs that occurs immediately following bariatric surgery.

I have given an earlier version of this lecture at a SAGES conference in Breckenridge Colorado and it was very well received.