

Education Matters
Advocacy Matters
Support Matters

OAC MEMBERS
MATTER

Being Successful

by Stephen G. Boyce, MD, FACS, FASMBS

I have been interested in medicine, health and fitness for as long as I can remember. I was born with severe asthma and was hospitalized many times with pneumonia and rheumatic fever. I was often referred to as a “sickly child,” unable to participate in sporting activities, and there were very few drugs to help my symptoms.

Learning to live, cope and adapt with a chronic disease shaped just about every area of my life, including my decision to become a doctor.



Dr. Boyce poses with his son Derek (left), his wife Courtney (center) and his daughter-in-law Guinn.

As I matured, my disease became more manageable, and I was able to incorporate physical exercise into my life. I became interested in weight training and exercise, which also improved my lung capacity and health. While in medical school and residency at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, Parkland Hospital, I trained for

and competed in triathlons and marveled at how changing my lifestyle improved my chronic asthma.



While I have never suffered from the disease of obesity, I certainly understand the life-long struggle of chronic disease. During my general surgery residency, I was introduced to bariatric surgery by one of the founders of bariatric surgery, Otto Willbanks, MD, who taught me how to perform what was, at the time, controversial, open bariatric surgery procedures. Even back then, I saw first-hand the dramatic health improvements that weight-loss could create and how the disease could be managed with proper treatment.

I moved to Knoxville, Tenn. in 1992 and set up my general and vascular surgery practice, including bariatric surgery in my practice. In 2003, I decided to devote my career to helping those affected by obesity, and created The New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery, which was designated the 7th Center of Excellence in the Nation by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS).



The staff at the New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery assist with ensuring the practice remains the 7th Center of Excellence.

Today, The New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery is accredited by the American College of Surgeons, providing a multidisciplinary team designed to meet the needs of individuals affected by obesity and to help them learn how to improve their life and health with proper tools and education.

I first learned of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) in 2005, and my staff and I quickly realized that the OAC would be an important advocate for education and access, two important issues for my practice and my patients.

I feel the OAC represents a great value for my patients as they receive not only an informative magazine that touches on many subjects of interest to anyone living with obesity, but also a membership in an organization that is committed to empowering them and meeting their needs through education, representation and support.

In the halls of my practice you might hear the words, “we are willing to commit if you are.” Bariatric surgery is just the beginning of a long journey to health and wellness. In my 25 years of treating patients affected by severe obesity, I know that the patients who are most successful continue with regular follow-up visits, implement healthy eating habits, exercise regularly and utilize educational tools.

“Being successful doesn’t necessarily make you great. What makes you great is when you reach back and help somebody else become great.”
– Joel Osteen

Just as a surgical weight-loss patient needs a multidisciplinary team to facilitate change and success after bariatric surgery, they also benefit greatly from education on multiple aspects of their new life. The well-informed and supported patient has the best chance of reaching their maximum health potential, and this need for information is the mechanism that creates the power of the OAC. One of the mechanisms for providing education for my bariatric surgery patients has been to enroll them for membership in the OAC.

Realizing early on in my practice that bariatric surgery requires specialized nutrition, and that vitamin deficiencies were a major concern, I developed a special interest in researching the nutritional, vitamin and mineral needs of my bariatric patients to ensure their long-term health. Based on my clinical experience, it became evident to me that there were not any supplements available for my patients that I was comfortable recommending, so I created my own custom vitamin and mineral formula that would encourage my patients to easily adhere to the supplementation program.

Now we have a full line of clinically-proven bariatric protein supplements and vitamins, Bari Life Bariatric Supplements, which are available online and in many doctor’s offices and hospital pharmacies. I am extremely proud of all that Bari Life has accomplished in providing quality products and educational tools designed specifically for bariatric patients

and anyone who is interested in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight.

Bari Life Bariatric Supplements has been a National sponsor for the OAC's National meetings and *Your Weight Matters Magazine*, and will continue to support the OAC in the future. Since signing-up that first patient for a membership, I

have seen great response to the Coalition from our patients and have facilitated more than 2,500 patient introductions through the OAC's Sponsored Membership Program. My partnership with the OAC has been personally rewarding, but most importantly has allowed me opportunities to give back and help my patients by directing them to this effective and committed organization.

In all our lives, we receive helping hands. Some we notice, some we don't. The OAC is a helping hand for the community of patients who are affected by obesity. We encourage you to get involved in the OAC, because you will gain the opportunity to help and be helped.

About the Author:

Stephen Boyce, MD, FACS, FASMBS, obtained his Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science from Texas A&M University, College Station, before beginning medical school in Dallas, Texas at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School where he received his medical degree. Surgical Residency was performed at Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas where he completed his general surgery training. With more than 24 years of experience performing bariatric surgeries, Dr. Boyce has completed more than 4,000 bariatric surgical procedures, has special training in advanced laparoscopic surgery and has also completed a Masters Certification in Bariatric Surgery. He started his own practice, the New Life Center for Bariatric Surgery, in Knoxville, Tenn. in 2002, which shortly after became one of the Nation's first Centers of Excellence (7th in the Nation) in 2005. His special interest in bariatric nutrition led him to develop Bari Life Bariatric Supplements, specializing in custom multivitamin formulas for the bariatric surgery patient. Additionally, he is an active educator for Ethicon-Endo Surgery and a two-time recipient of the OAC's "Dr. Blackstone Outstanding Membership Recruitment by a Physician" award.



Dr. Boyce (center) poses with OAC Board Member, Lloyd Stegemann, MD, FASMBS (left) and OAC President/CEO Joe Nadglowski while accepting the Dr. Blackstone Outstanding Recruitment by a Physician Award at the OAC's 2014 Annual Convention.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

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