

## FOX 17 Story: Surgery with a Warranty

Transcript: Obesity Warranty – Laura Faber

### **There's news that the health care industry is taking a cue from the auto industry.**

Much like a warranty you get when you buy a car, a local obesity center is the first to offer a warranty for some weight loss surgeries. Fox 17's Laura Faber has more. Evidence shows only 1% of the nation's 15 million morbidly obese people get weight loss surgery. Experts say it's partly due to cost, surgery averages \$25,000 and is usually not covered by insurance and complications can cost even more.

A mid-state woman who wanted and needed the surgery, but couldn't afford it until she learned of a warranty offered by the Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity. Peggy Phipps is recovering from Roux-en-Y gastric bypass, the most common type of weight loss surgery performed. Phipps says, "To be quite honest at times I felt like ending my life because I couldn't get control of my eating I felt like I was caught in a fixed place." Now Phipps is in a new place. Phipps no longer needs blood pressure medication and she's 45 pounds lighter, with more to come off. "The day of surgery...I have to say I wasn't nervous, I just knew this was going to be the next course of my life", said Phipps. For Phipps the decision to have weight loss surgery was a hard one in part

because of money. Her insurance didn't cover it, luckily her family chipped in to cover \$25,000 in expense of surgery. But, what if she had complications? Insurance wouldn't cover those either, so how would she pay for that? Phipps learned of a new warranty being offered at the Centennial Center for the Treatment of Obesity called "BLIS".

Bariatric Surgeon Dr. Doug Olsen says, "We certainly had the desire to cover people in a more extended fashion to cover those really big complications that though are rare... can happen and can be devastating." Dr. Olsen, who performed Phipps' surgery, says complications can cost a patient up to \$200,000. Centennial is the first hospital in Tennessee to ease that worry.

Just like a car warranty, bariatric patients get a standard warranty against complications during the first 8 weeks after surgery. "The biggest thing that we're looking for are infection that would come about from a leak .. bowel blockage .. pulmonary embolism", says Dr. Olsen. Dr. Olsen says the warranty ensures if something does go wrong, patients will come in for follow up care because it's covered. Phipps didn't end up needing her warranty, but says the piece of mind it gave her was priceless.

--Laura Faber, Fox 17 News.

**The "BLIS" warranty offers coverage of certain complications for different types of weight loss surgery. Patients can also buy an extended warranty to cover any complications for 18 months after surgery.**