The Negev Center for Eating Disorders

- Eating disorders are serious medical conditions, with severe medical implications
- There are NO facilities for the treatment of eating disorders in the entire Negev
- Efforts to establish a center for the treatment of eating disorders at Soroka have thus far failed due to a lack of resources

The Need

Eating Disorders reflect severe disturbances in eating behavior, which include extreme and unhealthy reduction of food intake or severe over-eating, as well as feelings of distress or extreme concern about body shape or weight.

Eating disorders are not due to a failure of will. They are real, treatable medical illnesses, in which maladaptive patterns of eating control a person’s life.

The main types of eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and binge-eating. The prevalence of eating disorders among adolescent and young adults is estimated to be about 7% of that total population. Females are much more likely than males to develop an eating disorder, with 90-95% of all cases occurring among young women.

Eating disorders are serious medical conditions, with severe medical complications and outcome: the fatality rate is reported to be as high as ten percent. The mean age of onset is around 14 years of age, though in recent years the age of onset has been decreasing, and severe cases can now be encountered among children 8 or 9 years of age.

The outcome of eating disorders can of course be influenced by appropriate treatment. Worldwide, the common practice is to treat eating disorders in highly
specialized, multidisciplinary units. Treatment in these special units includes medical treatment, psychiatric treatment, dietary intervention and guidance, and various modes of psychotherapy, family therapy and group therapy.

In Israel, there are centers that specialize in the treatment of eating disorders. None of them is in the Negev. This southern half of Israel has a population of one million people, including 400,000 children, of whom 180,000 are 10-19 years of age. We estimate that in the Negev there are approximately 12,500 children and young adults who suffer from the broad spectrum of eating disorders.

There are NO facilities for treatment of eating disorders in the entire Negev. Patients with the most severe and often life-threatening medical manifestations are treated as in-patients on an emergency basis. Soroka Medical Center does, however, have access to trained personnel competent to treat adolescents and young adults with eating disorders.

For a number of years, we have tried to establish a center for treatment of eating disorders. These efforts have thus far not met with success due to a lack of resources.

The Opportunity

There is currently a very special and critically important moment of opportunity to meet these needs. The Israeli Ministry of Health and Clalit Health Services have committed to provide the personnel for both ambulatory and in-patient care for eating disorders. We at Soroka Medical Center are committed to establishing a multidisciplinary center to meet the healthcare and medical needs of young patients suffering from eating disorders.

New physical space has also become available in which the proposed Negev Center for Eating Disorders could be appropriately housed in optimal conditions. A fourth floor has been added to the new Saban Pediatric Medical Building. Approximately 12,910 square feet of that new space has been designated by the management of the medical center for this purpose.
The Negev Center for Eating Disorders

We at Soroka Medical Center are committed to establishing a multidisciplinary center to treat patients who suffer from eating disorders from throughout the Negev.

The Negev Center for Eating Disorders will care for hospitalized and ambulatory children, youth, and young adults (as well as the occasional older adult who suffers from this disease). It will focus on assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of eating disorders, as well as education and prevention.

In addition, the Negev Center for Eating Disorders will:

- receive referrals from the Emergency Medicine Department and the Pediatrics Division, as well from primary care physicians in the community
- serve as a base for educational programming and be deeply involved in prevention through outreach to educators and therapists in the community
- train medical and other healthcare students, as well as physicians and nurses

After evaluation and diagnosis by the Center’s primary staff, a therapeutic program would be tailored for each individual patient. In accord with best professional practice, the plan of treatment would first emphasize stabilization of the medical-nutritional aspects of the disorder. Emphasis would then shift to the behavioral aspects of the disorder, and to the psychological well-being of the
adolescent and her/his family. This multidisciplinary approach is critical to the successful treatment of this complex disorder.

Through the affiliation of Soroka Medical Center with the Ben-Gurion University Faculty of Health Sciences, the Center would also serve as a clinical research center for the study of eating disorders. Special emphasis would be placed on populations that are classically underserved, such as new immigrants.

**Program**

The Negev Center for Eating Disorders will include 8 in-patient hospital beds, an outpatient day care unit that includes 12 beds, and a clinic. It will cover an area of 1,200 square meters (approx. 12,910 square feet).

The in-patient hospitalization area will include:

- Spacious hospital rooms
- Nurses station
- Medical and paramedical treatment rooms
- Medication storeroom
- Dressing rooms
- Kitchenette for education and treatment
- Dining area
- Conference room
- Storeroom
The outpatient unit and clinic area will include:

- Reception and waiting area
- Office
- Medical and paramedical treatment rooms
- Recovery room
- Dining area and kitchenette

**Donation and Donor Recognition**

The total cost of the project is $4,000,000. The Negev Center for Eating Disorders can be named by the donor for a gift of $1,500,000.

**This gift will fund:**

- interior construction of needed and suitable space
- the full range of medical equipment needed for both in-patient and ambulatory care
- furnishings for in-patient and out-patient services, medical and psychological consultation rooms, kitchen and education meeting spaces.

The additional funding needed for the project will be provided by Soroka Medical Center and Clalit Health Services, to construct the external shell of the facility and provide on an on-going basis the medical, paramedical, and therapy personnel for the Center, including psychiatrists and pediatricians specializing in adolescent medicine, psychiatric social workers, nurses, dieticians, and community educators.

The Negev Center for Eating Disorders will be named by the donor. Full and prominent donor recognition will be provided at Soroka Medical Center on-site at the Negev Center for Eating Disorders itself, on the Soroka Donors' Wall of Honor, and in a dignified public dedication ceremony. The naming will also be acknowledged in all publications and publicity related to the Center.

*Thank you for your consideration of partnering with us to respond to this important request and meet this vital need*
Contact:

Dr. Michael Sherf  
Director General  
Soroka Medical Center  
Tel: +972-8-640-3408, Fax: +972-8-627-7364  
email: michaelsh@clalit.org.il

Dr. Gerry Showstack, Resource Development  
Telefax: +972-8-646-7435, Mobile: +972-54-220-2608  
email: shows1@netvision.net.il

Soroka Medical Center  
External Affairs  
Tel: +972-8-640-3963, Fax: +972-8-640-3901  
email: iritbibii@clalit.org.il

American Friends of Soroka Medical Center  
Tel: 914-725-9070, Fax: 914-725-9073  
email: americanfriends@soroka.org  
website: www.soroka.org
Soroka Medical Center

➢ One of Israel’s largest medical centers

➢ Serving 60% of Israel’s total land area

➢ The sole major medical center in the entire Negev

➢ Caring for a population of more than 1,000,000 including 400,000 children

➢ The largest employer in the Negev

➢ More than 800 new immigrants on staff

➢ Deep and broad involvement in the community

➢ Israel’s largest trauma center and busiest emergency facility

➢ Over 13,000 births each year

➢ More than 32,000 operations and 200,000 emergency room visits annually

➢ More than 500,000 outpatient clinic visits per year