Purpose
The purpose of this pilot project was to offer industry resources, including education to an academic health center in California on the appropriate use of bariatric equipment to promote patient and staff safety.

Significance
While there is an ongoing national obesity epidemic, more bariatric patients are being admitted to hospitals, not only for elective weight loss surgery but for trauma and medical reasons as well. There is little evidence available on the use of clinical practice guidelines for this population. What has been identified in this unique population is a need for specialized or adapted equipment in the hospital setting. Equipment specially designed for the bariatric population is often safety rated for up to one thousand pounds.

Methods
The industry representative rounds weekly with the hospital’s Bariatric Consultant. The electronic medical record produces a daily census of morbidly obese inpatients which includes their height, weight and BMI. With this information, each patient on the list is visited by the industry representative and Bariatric Consultant. Together, they get input from the patient and assess the patient’s equipment needs. The patient’s primary nurse is also included in the discussion. Based on the patient’s clinical information and the nurse’s clinical judgment, the correct bed frame, mattress, and lift equipment are ordered. Other mobility devices and ancillary equipment are ordered as needed as the patient’s clinical condition warrants. The representative also does education on the equipment for the patient, their family and the nursing staff.

Findings
The patients report satisfaction with using equipment that meets their needs; the nursing staff reported satisfaction with having the right equipment readily available, thus reducing turn around time, to care for their patients. The nurses also appreciate the representative’s ability to identify which patients would benefit from using bariatric equipment.

Discussion or Implications
Partnering with industry to quickly identify patients that are in need of bariatric equipment removes one more task for nursing. The nurse knows that the right equipment will be ordered the first time and it prevents delays using specialty equipment that is needed to safely care for the bariatric patient thereby reducing the potential for patient and staff injury.