

September 4, 2025

Administrator Mehmet Oz
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Oz:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to urge you to include access for Medicare recipients to evidence-based obesity treatments such as intensive behavioral therapy (IBT) and Food & Drug Administration (FDA) - approved obesity medications in an upcoming proposed rule. Doing so will enable the Medicare program to align with the current medical evidence, standards of care, and scientific understanding that obesity is a chronic disease.

Obesity is a treatable chronic disease that plays a major factor in many other conditions such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, fatty liver disease, kidney disease, lipid disorders, certain cancers, sleep apnea, arthritis, and mental illness. The treatment of obesity requires a comprehensive approach including IBT, FDA-approved obesity medications, and metabolic and bariatric surgery as determined by a health care professional.

Medicare Part D's prohibition of coverage for "weight loss" medications is a major barrier for older Americans and those living with disabilities, and many dual eligible beneficiaries, to receiving medically necessary, safe, and effective FDA-approved pharmacotherapy to treat obesity. Medicare's current interpretation and restriction is outdated and does not reflect the prevailing medical consensus of the disease.

There is also evidence that IBT for obesity has numerous positive health improvements; however, the existing national coverage determination (NCD) for Medicare's IBT for obesity benefit does not align with current clinical guidelines and available scientific literature. Medicare limits IBT counseling to only a qualified primary care physician or other primary care practitioner in the primary care setting. These requirements severely limit access to these treatments for Medicare beneficiaries living with obesity.

Obesity is one of the leading contributors to preventable disease and rising healthcare costs in the U.S. As organizations committed to the expansion of coverage for comprehensive obesity treatment, we are also supportive of the reported Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) proposal to expand coverage to obesity medications under Medicare and Medicaid. We agree that expanding coverage through an innovation delivery model program could be a potential first step toward ensuring all

Americans have access to comprehensive obesity treatments including medications and intensive behavioral therapy. We hope CMS moves forward in this process and we look forward to providing feedback to ensure that all Americans receive life-changing treatment.

Without treatment, Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries with obesity risk further health deterioration and a significantly increased likelihood in the onset of complications including obesity-related cancers, type 2 diabetes, and end stage renal disease. Additionally, people with severe obesity have a 48 percent higher risk of physical injury, including falls, which leads to higher costs and mortality rates.

In your new role as CMS Administrator, you have an opportunity to take action to address this crisis, by allowing Medicare to offer comprehensive obesity care for the millions of Americans who need these services and treatments.

Signed:

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Advocacy Action Network

Alliance for Patient Access

Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention

American Academy of Physician Associates

American Association of Clinical Endocrinology

American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine

American Diabetes Association

American Gastroenterological Association

American Kidney Fund

American Medical Women's Association

American Psychological Association Services

American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery

American Society for Nutrition

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago

Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists

Biomarker Collaborative

Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation

CancerCare

Caregiver Action Network

Caring Ambassadors Program

Center for Patient Advocacy Leaders

Choose Healthy Life

Christian Council of Delmarva

Color of Gastrointestinal Illnesses

Colorado Obesity Society

Community Liver Alliance

ConscienHealth

DCM Foundation

Defeat Malnutrition Today

Diabetes Leadership Council

Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition

Endocrine Society

Exon 20 Group

Fatty Liver Foundation

Gerontological Society of America

Global Liver Institute

HealthyWomen

ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network

Illinois Obesity Society

League of United Latin American Citizens

Liver Coalition of San Diego

Looms For Lupus

Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.

Lupus Foundation of America

MET Crusaders

Michigan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Missouri Psychological Association

MoKan Weight Loss and Metabolic Health

Movement is Life

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging

National Association of Hispanic Nurses

National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs

National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

National Association of Social Workers

National Black Nurses Association, Inc

National Consumers League

National Council on Aging

National Hispanic Medical Association

National Kidney Foundation

National Psoriasis Foundation

Nevada Chronic Care Collaborative

New York State Academy of Family Physicians

Northeast Ohio Black Health Coalition

Obesity Action Coalition

Obesity Medicine Association

Ohio Chapter of the American College of Cardiology

Organization for Latino Health Advocacy

PAN Foundation

PAs in Obesity Medicine

PD-L1 Amplifieds

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

Raymond A. Wood Foundation

RetireSafe

San Antonio Obesity Society

Society for Women's Health Research

STOP Obesity Alliance

Texas Academy of Family Physicians

The Center for Science in the Public Interest

The Mended Hearts, Inc.

The Obesity Society

Weigh to Wellness Denver

Western Colorado Weight Care, LLC

WomenHeart

YMCA of the USA