



## Obesity Care Should Be Covered Like Any Other Chronic Disease—It's Only Fair

To America's Employers,

Led by the EveryBODY Covered campaign and the Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention, we are writing to ask for your support in ensuring that obesity is covered by your health plans just like any other chronic disease.

For many years, obesity has been **recognized** as a chronic, treatable disease with many causes, including some outside of one's control. Comprehensive obesity coverage should include the full range of **evidence-based obesity care options**, including medical nutrition therapy, intensive behavioral therapy, surgery and FDA-approved medications.

**Obesity has a significant impact on women**—particularly women of color—across every stage of life.

- The disease is associated with **over 200** serious health complications, such as sleep apnea, heart disease and diabetes, as well as those that especially impact women, such as breast cancer and fertility issues.
- Women living with obesity are often **stigmatized** by coworkers, less likely to be **promoted** and earn as much as **12% less** money than their colleagues.

**The status quo must change.**

**When coverage for obesity care isn't available, patients are left to seek less safe alternatives or forego treatment altogether.** Employers are financially impacted when obesity is left untreated—obesity costs employers approximately **\$425.5 billion** annually. Covering obesity care also has the **potential** to help lower costs through reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and a healthier workforce.

**The EveryBODY Covered campaign encourages employers to prioritize obesity within workplace healthcare and equity strategies by:**

1. **Recognizing obesity as a chronic disease with causes that include those outside of an individual's control.** This includes an understanding of the impact the disease has on all aspects of employee well-being, including physical, social and financial considerations.
2. **Reviewing your benefits offerings for opportunities to better support obesity care for your employees and communicate coverage as a priority to your benefits administrators.** Coverage for obesity care that is **comprehensive** should include four pillars: medical nutrition therapy,

intensive behavioral therapy, FDA-approved medications and bariatric surgery.

3. **Working against weight bias at every level of your company and making sure that this is demonstrated through your company's culture.** Some strategies to address [weight stigma](#) include educating your employees about [weight bias](#); using person-first, inclusive language; establishing an employee resource group (ERG); and providing reasonable accommodations for employees living with obesity (e.g., telework and sick leave policies).

Companies have taken varying approaches to providing obesity care coverage for their employees. Best practice recommendations from leading organizations include:

- [Comprehensive Obesity Benefit](#) and [Checklist](#) from the Stop Obesity Alliance
- [Employer Recommendations to Address Obesity Coverage](#) from the National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions
- [An Employer's Practical Playbook for Treating Obesity](#) from the Business Group on Health
- [Modernizing Care for Obesity as a Chronic Disease: A How-To Guide for Employers](#) from the Milken Institute

**We appreciate employers' tireless commitment to advancing employee health** and hope you'll answer the call to better support employees living with obesity in the workplace. We would welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss how your company can be a leader in addressing this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention  
Aimed Alliance  
Alliance for Aging Research  
Alliance for Patient Access  
Alliance of Sleep Apnea Partners  
American Association of Birth Centers  
American Association of Nurse Practitioners  
American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
American College of Physicians  
American Kidney Fund  
American Medical Women's Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery  
American Society of Preventive Cardiology  
Association of Black Cardiologists  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Arthritis Foundation  
BlackDoctor.org

Black Women's Health Imperative  
Black Women for Change  
Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation  
Brem Foundation to Defeat Breast Cancer  
Caregiver Action Network  
Center for Patient Advocacy Leaders  
Color of Gastrointestinal Illnesses  
ConscienHealth  
Creating Healthier Communities  
DiabetesSisters  
Diabetes Leadership Council  
Diabetes Patient Advocacy Coalition  
Gerontological Society of America  
Global Liver Institute  
GO2 for Lung Cancer  
Haven Midwifery Collective  
Health Equity Coalition for Chronic Disease  
HealthyWomen  
Heart Sistas Inc.  
MANA, A National Latina Organization  
The Mended Hearts, Inc.  
National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions  
National Association of Hispanic Nurses  
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health  
National Black Nurses Association  
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging  
National Consumers League  
National Council on Aging  
National Grange  
National Hispanic Council on Aging  
National Hispanic Health Foundation  
National Medical Association  
National Menopause Foundation  
National Rural Health Association  
National Student Nurses' Association  
Obesity Action Coalition  
Obesity Care Advocacy Network  
Obesity Medicine Association  
Obesity Medicine Fellowship Council  
Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health  
Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease  
Prevent Cancer Foundation  
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association  
RetireSafe  
Society for Women's Health Research  
The Obesity Society  
TOUCH, The Black Breast Cancer Alliance  
WomenHeart