

The Honorable Jason Smith
House Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
House Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal,

We applaud the work of Representative Wenstrup and Representative Moore to find solutions to the obesity crisis. We, the undersigned, support their effort to allow individuals to maintain their treatment for obesity without being denied access to lifesaving treatments when enrolling in Medicare. Current law is intolerable, inequitable and disrupts the continuity of care for patients. We support the revised version of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (H.R. 4818) being marked-up this week. It is an important first step towards our goal of ensuring all Medicare beneficiaries with the disease of obesity have access to comprehensive treatment options.

All of our organizations have long supported the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA). This latest legislative effort is a critical step forward. We look forward to the Committee marking up the Wenstrup - Moore legislation to provide immediate relief to Medicare beneficiaries facing discontinuation of care.

In 2013, the American Medical Association recognized obesity as a complex chronic disease. That same year, TROA was introduced for the first time. In the 10 years since, the disease obesity has become an epidemic, with more than two in five American adults living with obesity. According to a 2019 study by the New England Journal of Medicine nearly one in two adults will have obesity by 2030. These rates are higher for communities of color, with almost half of Black and Latino adults suffering from obesity. It is past time to take action to address the obesity epidemic and ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have access to these life saving medications.

We urge all members of the committee to support this obesity care legislation. We look forward to working with lawmakers to pave the way for Medicare's full coverage of anti-obesity medications.

Sincerely,

American Diabetes Association
American Medical Women's Association
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
Association of Black Cardiologists
Black Health
BlackDoctor.org
Choose Healthy Life
Council on Black Health
Empire Baptist Missionary Convention
Gerontological Society of America
Health Equity Coalition for Chronic Disease
HealthyWomen
MANA, A National Latina Organization
National Action Network
National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)
National Black Nurses Association, Inc
National Black Leadership Commission on Health
National Council on Aging
National Consumers League
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Health Foundation
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Minority Quality Forum
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association

Cc: Members of the Committee

List in formation