



August 11, 2015

STATE POLICYMAKER

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

The Obesity Care Continuum (OCC) would like to make you aware of new policy recently adopted by the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) to "Support Efforts to Reduce the Incidence of Obesity and Chronic Disease." As you may know, the membership of NCOIL consists of the chairs and members of insurance committees in state legislatures across the country.

The goal of this new policy is to encourage state policymakers to focus on increasing access to obesity pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery in Health Exchange benchmark plans, Medicaid and other state health programs as well as Qualified Health Plans offered through the exchanges.

The resolution reads as follows:

NCOIL urges the 50 State Legislatures, health departments and other state agencies and institutions to make the prevention and treatment of obesity a high priority and to work to ameliorate obesity-related problems, such as worker productivity and absenteeism, as well as medically related costs, while improving the health and wellness of all persons through the following measures:

- Encourage states that operate their own exchanges or those with federal-state partnership exchanges to consider the selection of benchmark plans that allow for access to the entire range of treatment options for wellness and preventive policies, including treatments for obesity such as pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery
- Encourage the implementation of chronic disease management programs (CDMPs) in state Medicaid and other state health programs, or to seek out other sources of program funding for CDMPs, such as grants other public or private programs, that emphasize the management of obesity, including coverage of the full range of obesity treatments, particularly new innovative treatments such as pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery
- Encourage state exchanges to incentivize Qualified Health Plans to include coverage of the full spectrum of obesity treatments or to implement CDMPs that include the full range of obesity treatments, including new innovative measures such as pharmacotherapy and bariatric surgery

The adoption of this new policy by NCOIL resulted from the leadership of New York State Assemblyman Kevin Cahill and Louisiana State Representative Marcus Hunter who worked

throughout the last two years in crafting the final language that was adopted during the July NCOIL meeting. Adoption of this new policy is even more remarkable given that NCOIL has never passed any resolutions or model legislation that has focused on any specific disease category.

Given that few benchmark plans selected for state health exchanges include coverage for the full spectrum of obesity treatment, or require chronic disease management programs for obesity, it is evident that this recent action by NCOIL signals that state policymakers acknowledge the critical need to start treating obesity seriously! Therefore, the OCC urges you to work with your colleagues in the state legislature and regulatory agencies to ensure that the citizens of your state have access to, and coverage of, the full spectrum of evidence-based obesity treatment services.

Should you have any questions or need additional information regarding the new NCOIL obesity policy, please contact OCC Washington Coordinator Chris Gallagher either by telephone at 571-235-6475 or via email at [chris@potomaccurrents.com](mailto:chris@potomaccurrents.com). Thank you.

Sincerely,



John Morton, MD  
President, American  
Society for Metabolic and  
Bariatric Surgery



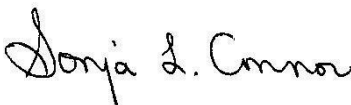
Eric Westman, MD  
President, American Society of  
Bariatric Physicians



Joe Nadglowski  
President & CEO  
of the *Obesity Action  
Coalition* (OAC)



Nikhil Dhurandhar, PhD  
President, The Obesity  
Society



Sonja L. Connor, MS, RDN,  
LDN, FAND  
President, Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics

***About the Obesity Care Continuum:***

*The leading obesity advocate groups founded the Obesity Care Continuum (OCC) in 2010 to better influence the healthcare reform debate and its impact on those affected by overweight and obesity. Currently, the OCC is composed of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), the Obesity Society (TOS), the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND), the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS), and the American Society of Bariatric Physicians (ASBP). With a combined membership of more than 125,000 patient and healthcare professional advocates, the OCC covers the full scope of care from nutrition, exercise and weight management through pharmacotherapy to device and bariatric surgery. Members of the OCC also challenge weight bias and stigma-oriented policies – whenever and wherever they occur.*