



June 25, 2024

Ways and Means Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Neal, Congressman Wenstrup, Congresswoman Moore, and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

As the CEO of the Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP), an organization focused on ensuring accessible, affordable and equitable preventive health care for all women and girls, I am writing to applaud your efforts to expand access to care for obesity treatments, including through the upcoming markup scheduled for this Thursday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

Obesity is a chronic disease with a significant impact on women, including those with coverage through the Medicare program. **More than [3 in 10 women](#) nationwide are affected by obesity and the disease has a [disproportionate impact](#) on women of color.** It is associated with over 200 other chronic conditions, including many that specifically affect women throughout their lives, such as breast and ovarian cancers as well as fertility issues. What's more, **obesity also has a tremendous economic burden**, with economic costs (both direct and indirect) totaling [\\$1.72 trillion in 2018](#).

Given obesity's extensive impact, **AWHP believes that insurance coverage for the full scope of obesity care options is critical to improving women's health.** Evidence-based obesity care includes counseling or intensive behavioral therapy, behavior modification, obesity medications, weight loss surgeries, and nutrition services. Thursday's markup is an important step towards expanding access to behavioral supports and pharmacotherapeutics for all Medicare beneficiaries.

Continued lack of coverage for obesity care by the Medicare program will exacerbate health inequities for older women and communities of color. As such, AWHP strongly urges this Committee to take action to ensure equitable access to obesity care for older Americans. Our organization is grateful for the Committee's attention to this important issue.

Respectfully,

Millicent Gorham, CEO  
Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention