



Alliance for Women's
Health & Prevention

July 26th, 2024

Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, and Members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

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 request your support in expanding access to care for obesity treatments by prioritizing the passage of the amended version of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (S.2407), also known as TROA.**

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. The introduction of TROA is an important step towards expanding access to behavioral support 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. We are grateful for the Committee's attention to this important issue.

Respectfully,

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