



November 20, 2024

Commissioner Andrea Barton Reeves
CT Department of Social Services
55 Farmington Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105

Dear Commissioner Barton Reeves,

The Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP) respectfully **requests your support for the immediate implementation of Public Act 23-94, which establishes coverage for obesity medications and weight-loss surgery through Connecticut's Medicaid program.** Although this legislation was scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2023, it has yet to be implemented, leaving many people living with the disease of obesity in Connecticut without access to this important treatment.

As an organization focused on women's preventive health, AWHP recognizes that obesity is a chronic, treatable disease and an urgent women's health issue. [Four in 10 women](#) in Connecticut are living with obesity, and it has a [disproportionate impact](#) on women of color. It is linked to over 200 health complications, including many that specifically affect women throughout their lives, such as breast and ovarian cancers and fertility issues. Collectively, health complications linked to obesity accounted for nearly [\\$255 million](#) in increased Medicaid spending in Connecticut in 2023, and increased local employers' healthcare costs by [\\$610 million](#).

Unfortunately, despite its serious consequences, obesity is often misunderstood, leading to insurance barriers that place the full range of evidence-based obesity care—including obesity medications, weight-loss surgery, nutrition counseling and intensive behavioral therapy (IBT)—out of reach for many women. Nearly [four in five people](#) in Connecticut who receive insurance through their employer do not have coverage for obesity medications. For older adults in Connecticut, the federal Medicare program does not cover obesity medications and places significant limits on coverage for IBT. **We believe it's only fair for obesity care to be covered just as care for other chronic diseases is covered.**

AWHP applauds recent efforts by the state of Connecticut to address crucial gaps in access to obesity care. Connecticut currently offers coverage for obesity medications to state employees participating in a lifestyle management program. The state also took another major step by passing legislation to provide coverage for obesity medications and weight-loss surgery to Connecticut's Medicaid population. To continue this positive momentum, we urge the CT Department of Social Services to finalize the implementation of this legislation (Public Act 23-94) without delay.

AWHP, along with 20 leading stakeholders from across the healthcare community, recently launched the [EveryBODY Covered](#) campaign, a first-of-its-kind initiative aiming to activate women to advocate for insurance coverage of comprehensive obesity care. We stand ready as a resource to address any questions or concerns that you may have and appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Respectfully,

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