



March 12, 2025

Dear Chair Felipe, Vice Chair Wilson and esteemed members of the Connecticut Legislative Black and Puerto Rican Caucus:

The Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP) respectfully urges you to prioritize supporting efforts to expand Medicaid coverage for the full range of evidence-based, comprehensive obesity care options, including medications, for Connecticut residents living with obesity.

As an organization focused on women's preventive health, AWHP recognizes that obesity is a chronic disease with a significant impact on women in Connecticut, and particularly women of color.

- **[30% of Connecticut women](#) are affected by obesity**, with a **[disproportionate impact](#)** on women of color: **[nearly 58% of Black women and 49% of Hispanic women](#)** in Connecticut are living with obesity.
- Obesity is **[associated with over 200 health complications](#)**, including many that specifically affect women, such as **[breast and ovarian cancers](#)** and **[fertility challenges](#)**.
- Women with obesity are more likely to face **harmful social stigma and discrimination — including [earning up to 9% less](#)** than women not living with obesity.

Obesity also has a tremendous economic burden for the state of Connecticut, highlighting the urgent need for effective prevention and strategies.

- In 2023 alone, obesity and overweight cost the **Connecticut economy approximately [\\$6.1 billion](#)** and caused **Connecticut employers to spend an extra [\\$2.1 billion](#)** on higher healthcare, absenteeism, and disability costs.

AWHP believes that **insurance coverage for the full scope of obesity care options**—including counseling or intensive behavioral therapy, nutrition services, behavior modification, bariatric surgeries, and obesity management medications (OMMs)—**is critical to improving women's health across Connecticut.**

We are deeply grateful that members of the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus have supported Public Act 23-94, which establishes coverage for obesity medications for weight loss, as well as 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 Connecticut residents living with obesity without access to treatment. AWHP believes it's only fair for obesity care to be covered just as care for other chronic diseases is covered, and **[wrote to the Connecticut Department of Social Services](#)** in November 2024 to encourage implementation of the legislation without delay.

We respectfully encourage Caucus members to continue urging the Connecticut Department of Social Services to work toward the implementation of Public Act 23-94, and to oppose any proposals that would restrict coverage for individuals living with obesity in Connecticut.

New obesity treatments could transform how we manage obesity and prevent associated health complications. **Comprehensive coverage for these and other obesity care options could improve the health of millions of Connecticut residents, particularly women of color**, living with obesity and protect the state from incurring additional medical costs from treating serious health complications linked to obesity.

If you care about women's health, you must care about obesity too.

Respectfully,

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