



March 14, 2025

Dear Chairwoman Burton,

The Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP) respectfully urges you to prioritize expanding Medicaid coverage for the full range of evidence-based, comprehensive obesity care options, including medications, for Florida residents living with obesity by supporting SB 648.

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

- **29% of Florida women** are affected by obesity, with a [disproportionate impact](#) on women of color.
- Obesity is [associated with over 200 health complications](#), including many that specifically affect women, such as [breast and ovarian cancers](#) and [fertility challenges](#).
- Across the country, 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 Florida, highlighting the urgent need for effective prevention and strategies.

- In 2023 alone, obesity and overweight cost the **Florida economy approximately \$30.1 billion** and caused **Florida employers to spend an extra \$6 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—**is critical to improving women's health across Florida.**

As such, AWHP respectfully encourages you to prioritize efforts that ensure access to comprehensive obesity care by taking action to advance SB 648. We urge the Health Policy Committee to hold a hearing on the legislation, which would mandate Medicaid coverage for the full range of evidence-based, comprehensive obesity care options, including intensive behavioral treatments, bariatric surgery, and approved medications.

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 Florida residents, particularly women,** 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. We appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Respectfully,

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



March 14, 2025

Dear Chairman Anderson,

The Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP) respectfully urges you to prioritize expanding Medicaid coverage for the full range of evidence-based, comprehensive obesity care options, including medications, for Florida residents living with obesity by supporting HB 713.

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

- **29% of Florida women are affected by obesity**, with a [disproportionate impact](#) on women of color.
- Obesity is [associated with over 200 health complications](#), including many that specifically affect women, such as [breast and ovarian cancers](#) and [fertility challenges](#).
- Across the country, 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 Florida, highlighting the urgent need for effective prevention and strategies.

- In 2023 alone, obesity and overweight cost the **Florida economy approximately \$30.1 billion** and caused **Florida employers to spend an extra \$6 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—**is critical to improving women's health across Florida.**

As such, AWHP respectfully encourages you to prioritize efforts that ensure access to comprehensive obesity care by taking action to advance HB 713. We urge the Health Care Facilities & Systems Subcommittee to hold a hearing on the legislation, which would mandate Medicaid coverage for the full range of evidence-based, comprehensive obesity care options, including intensive behavioral treatments, bariatric surgery, and approved medications.

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 Florida residents, particularly women**, 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. We appreciate your attention to this important issue.

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Millicent Gorham
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