



Alliance for Women's
Health & Prevention

Letter of Support (FAV) – SB 0496

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
Maryland General Assembly
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 13, 2026

Dear Chair Beidle and members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

As the CEO of the [Alliance for Women's Health & Prevention \(AWHP\)](#), I am writing to express my support for [Senate Bill 0496 \(SB 0496\)](#), which would expand access to comprehensive obesity treatment under the Maryland Medical Assistance Program.

Obesity is a complex, chronic disease that disproportionately affects women as well as communities of color. Yet despite clear medical consensus that obesity requires comprehensive, evidence-based treatment, Maryland's Medical Assistance Program does not allow beneficiaries to access certain obesity medications until diagnosed with type 2 diabetes or after having survived a heart attack or stroke. This misguided policy is one factor contributing to the higher rates of obesity and related complications that Medicaid beneficiaries often experience. Comprehensive obesity treatment is not elective care. It is essential to treating the chronic disease of obesity as well as preventing over [200 associated health complications](#), including many that specifically affect women, such as breast and ovarian cancers and fertility challenges. Comprehensive obesity care includes intensive behavioral therapy, nutrition services, bariatric surgery and FDA-approved medications.

SB 0496 represents a meaningful and forward-looking policy solution. By authorizing full coverage of obesity care beginning January 1, 2027, Maryland would ensure that Maryland Medical Assistance Program beneficiaries have access to the full continuum of medically appropriate treatment options. Expanding coverage for these individuals would be a critical step toward improving health outcomes and advancing health equity across the state.

We respectfully urge the Senate Finance Committee to advance SB 0496 and stand ready to support the Committee's work on this topic.

Sincerely,

Millicent Gorham
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