



General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Joint Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St
Rooms 212 and 243
Boston, MA 02133

March 30, 2026

Dear Chairmen Rodrigues and Michlewitz, Vice-Chairwoman Comerford and Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

As the CEO of the Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention (AWHP), I am writing to express my sincere disappointment with the recently proposed removal of MassHealth coverage for obesity management medications when prescribed solely for weight loss. As you work to finalize the state's FY2027 budget, I implore you to reconsider this harmful action and to protect MassHealth beneficiaries who rely on this coverage to access needed obesity care.

While we understand that Massachusetts must make difficult decisions in a time of rising healthcare costs, we firmly believe that the decision to eliminate MassHealth coverage of obesity management medications for weight loss is shortsighted, costing the state more in the long run and posing serious health risks to the state's most vulnerable residents. To put it simply, Massachusetts is going to pay either way—either by paying to treat the chronic disease now or by paying for the consequences later.

As you consider policies related to obesity care coverage, I encourage you to think of obesity as a serious chronic disease with a significant impact on women across Massachusetts. Here's why:

- **27.8% of Massachusetts 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.

Improved access to **comprehensive obesity care, which includes medications**, is key to addressing the obesity epidemic across the U.S., and especially in Massachusetts. When obesity is left untreated, it can lead to **higher rates of other chronic diseases, like diabetes, heart disease and cancer, requiring more costly treatment and possible hospitalization** for patients and putting an even greater strain on Massachusetts' MassHealth program. In fact, recent data shows

that improved access to some obesity medications reduces future medical costs that result from the health complications linked to the disease.

Patients deserve better. Obesity care should be covered just like care for any other chronic disease—it's only fair. As such, AWHP respectfully urges you to maintain MassHealth coverage of obesity management medications for weight loss. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

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