



Louisiana House Health and Welfare Committee
900 N. 3rd Street, Room 1715
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

May 18, 2026

Dear Chair Miller, Vice-Chair McMahan and Members of the House Committee on Health and Welfare,

As the CEO of the Alliance for Women's Health & Prevention (AWHP), I am pleased to see the recent passage of Senate Bill 433 (SB 433) out of the Senate. This bill would expand access to comprehensive obesity treatment by requiring Louisiana's Medicaid managed care organizations to cover obesity management medications. I respectfully urge the House Committee on Health and Welfare to advance SB 433.

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, Louisiana Medicaid does not provide coverage for obesity management medications, leaving a critical gap in care. This misguided policy falls hardest on women, who are not only disproportionately impacted by obesity, but also disproportionately reliant on Medicaid assistance.

Obesity management medications are not vanity drugs. They are critical interventions for a serious chronic disease and an important tool in helping to prevent the over 200 health complications associated with obesity, including many that specifically affect women, such as breast and ovarian cancers and fertility challenges.¹ Effectively addressing the obesity epidemic in Louisiana, where the disease impacts 13% of adult Medicaid beneficiaries, requires coverage for the full continuum of obesity care—including behavioral therapy, nutrition services, bariatric surgery and FDA-approved medications.²

While we understand that there may be cost concerns related to expanding Louisiana Medicaid coverage of obesity management medications, increasing access for comprehensive, evidence-based care could ultimately reduce the financial burden of obesity on the state. In 2023, obesity cost Louisiana's Medicaid program \$249 million and the broader state economy \$439 million.³ Simply put, Louisiana is going to pay either way—either by paying to treat the chronic disease now or paying for the consequences later.

We commend the Senate for advancing SB 433—a meaningful, forward-looking policy solution. By requiring coverage of obesity management medications beginning January 1, 2027, Louisiana

¹ <https://www.ama-assn.org/topics/obesity>

² https://ldh.la.gov/assets/docs/LegisReports/ACT210/Act_210_Diabetes_Obesity_Report_Medicaid_2025.pdf

³ <https://www.globaldata.com/health-economics/US/Louisiana/Obesity-Impact-on-Louisiana-Factsheet.pdf>

Medicaid beneficiaries will see marked improvements in access to the full continuum of medically appropriate treatment options for obesity. Expanding coverage for these individuals would be a critical step toward improving health outcomes across the state. We respectfully urge the House Committee on Health and Welfare to advance SB 433 and stand ready to support the Committee's work on this important issue.

Sincerely,

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