



The October 5, 2023, Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [blog](#) post calling for new research in obesity highlights the urgent need to implement solutions to address this serious chronic disease. The Obesity Care Advocacy Network (OCAN) is pleased that CBO is taking an active interest in evaluating the need for broader patient access to care, including through avenues like the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA), that would address obesity treatment gaps in the Medicare program.

As a network of organizations representing people living with obesity, researchers, and the health care providers who care for them, OCAN agrees that we must have more realistic assessments surrounding the costs of obesity. However, denying coverage to older adults and those with disabilities, as more research and data collection is done, is not the answer. Access and research must come hand-and-hand. Additionally, arguments that say we should only cover obesity care if it saves money on health expenses in the short-term are both short-sighted and rooted in bias. Such an approach has never been required for any other chronic disease.

Instead of evaluating obesity interventions solely on their ability to save money, we need to build cost models that include all treatment options available. These models should include health outcomes in addition to weight loss like mental health, quality of life, enhanced mobility, reduced joint pain, prevention of type 2 diabetes, decreased cardiovascular disease risk factors, improved sleep, and other related chronic diseases and conditions.

For too long, we have held obesity to a different standard. Obesity is a serious chronic disease. It's time for a more holistic, bias-free approach to obesity care. OCAN looks forward to responding to the CBO request for additional research and helping inform assumptions applied to scoring the cost of enacting TROA based on real world data.

*Founded in 2015, OCAN is a diverse group of organizations focused on changing how we perceive and approach obesity in the United States. OCAN works to increase access to evidence-based obesity treatments by uniting key stakeholders and the broader obesity community around significant education, policy, and legislative efforts. We aim to fundamentally change how the U.S. healthcare system treats obesity, and to shift the cultural mindset on obesity so that policymakers and the public address obesity as a serious chronic disease.*