

April 14, 2026

Dear Chairman Hunt, Vice-Chairman Potucek and Members of the House Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee:

My name is Millicent Gorham, and I am the Chief Executive Officer for the Alliance for Women's Health & Prevention (AWHP).

I want to thank Senator Sue Prentiss for introducing SB455, legislation that would improve access to FDA-approved obesity management medications for Medicaid beneficiaries.

Impact of Obesity

Obesity has been recognized as a disease by AWHP and other major organizations such as the American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health, American Diabetes Association, and the World Health Organization. Approximately 380,000 adults in New Hampshire are living with obesity.¹ Obesity is the leading risk factor for type 2 diabetes and is linked to up to 53 percent of new cases of type 2 diabetes each year.² There are 200 medical conditions associated with obesity which include heart disease, high blood pressure, and multiple types of cancer.³

Recommendations

AWHP supports coverage for comprehensive obesity treatment. This includes access to evidence-based and person-centered interventions, including intensive behavioral and lifestyle treatment, FDA-approved obesity medications, and metabolic and bariatric surgery when appropriate. We support the use of FDA-approved medications for the treatment of obesity which are indicated for individuals with a BMI of 30 or greater or a BMI of 27 or greater if they have a related health condition.⁴

Benefits of Obesity Medications and Financial Burden of Not Treating

The health benefits of effective weight management with obesity medications, along with lifestyle interventions, are extensively and consistently documented.

The financial burden of treating conditions related to obesity also underscores the need for coverage. For people with obesity, per-patient-per-year health care expenditures are estimated to be \$4,958 greater than those not living with obesity.⁶ The associated health care expenses in New Hampshire from obesity are estimated to reach nearly \$2.4 billion annually.⁷

New Hampshire residents living with the disease of obesity deserve access to evidence-based treatments that can help improve their health and ultimately drive down related health care costs. While access to other care for obesity remains important (such as intensive behavioral therapy and nutrition counseling), we can't ignore the key role that obesity medications have in addressing obesity and serious health conditions.

Investments in Prevention Save Lives and Money

Investing in the coverage of obesity medications will dramatically improve the health of those living with obesity and enable them to avoid developing costly comorbidities like heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Over the long term it is a common sense, cost-conscious way to address the burden of obesity in New Hampshire.

We respectfully ask this committee to support passage of this legislation. If you have any questions, please contact me at mgorham@womenshealthandprevention.org.

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

¹ American Diabetes Association, 2025 New Hampshire Fact Sheet, <https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/the-burden-of-obesity-new-hampshire-05-08-25.pdf>

² American Diabetes Association, Obesity Advocacy, <https://diabetes.org/advocacy/obesity>

³ Obesity Association - A Division of the American Diabetes Association, <https://obesityassociation.org/>

⁴ American Diabetes Association Professional Practice Committee for Obesity, Pharmacologic Treatment of Obesity in Adults: Standards of Care in Overweight and Obesity, DOCM CARE 2026, doci250008, <https://doi.org/10.2337/doci25-0008>

⁵ AON, Workforce-Focused Analysis on GLP-1s: Research Findings and Methodology, <https://assets.aon.com/-/media/files/aon/reports/2025/workforce-focused-analysis-on-glp-1s.pdf>

⁶ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Adult Obesity Facts, <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult-obesity-facts/index.html>

⁷ American Diabetes Association, 2025 New Hampshire Fact Sheet, <https://diabetes.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/the-burden-of-obesity-new-hampshire-05-08-25.pdf>