

ACCESS TO CARE

February 28th - March 6th, 2021

Today, more than 93 million adult Americans are living with obesity. Many do not know obesity is disease and that their healthcare provider can help them with weight-loss and maintenance. Others do not have insurance coverage to help them pay for these healthcare options.

Everyone should have access to healthcare. Access should not be limited by a person's size, weight or economic status. Access to care is not a complicated idea. It can mean different things for different people, but in the end, it is about people getting the help they need to treat obesity.

Access to care begins with seeing obesity as a chronic disease diagnosed by a healthcare provider. Obesity is not someone's fault or their job to manage alone.

People with obesity can face barriers when it comes to access to care.

INSURANCE DENIALS

Very few insurance companies pay for obesity care and weight management options such as:

- Bariatric surgery
- Medical weight management
- Consultations with dietitians



ACCEPTING CARE

It may be hard for some people to accept obesity care from a healthcare provider. This can be from:

- A negative care experience in the past
- A belief that they need to lose the weight on their own
- Unsuccessful weight-loss in the past



IMPROPER EQUIPMENT

People with obesity deserve medical equipment that meet their needs. Individual needs can vary, but often include:

- Scales
- Blood pressure cuffs
- Exam gowns



AVAILABLE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

A team of healthcare providers who understand obesity medicine can give the best care. This team can include:

- Physicians
- Nurse practitioners and Physician Assistants
- Registered dietitians



REQUIRED STEPS FOR INSURANCE COVERAGE:

Many insurance companies have requirements to qualify for obesity care coverage. Requirements can be:

- Referrals
- Long wait times
- Mandatory weight-loss



These barriers can include:

SCIENCE-BASED CARE

There is no miracle cure for obesity. However, effective, science-based treatment options and intensive behavioral therapies do exist. Receiving these options is not possible if your healthcare provider does not know about them.



AVAILABLE LIFELONG CARE

Obesity is a chronic disease. Patients deserve access to lifelong obesity care even if the weight maintenance period has been reached.



WHOLE PERSON CARE

Patients need effective and respectful care no matter what health condition(s) they have. Treatment for the flu or back pain should not be dependent on a patient's weight or size.

