



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION
PRACTICE ORGANIZATION

November 4, 2014

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Carper and Murkowski:

On behalf of the American Psychological Association Practice Organization (APAPO), I would like to express our support for the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (S. 1184), legislation to help increase Medicare coverage of obesity treatments, prevent chronic diseases and lower health care costs.

The APAPO is dedicated to advancing the practice of psychology, and promotes the interests of psychologists who practice in all settings. The APAPO is a companion organization to the American Psychological Association (APA), the largest scientific and professional membership organization representing psychology in the United States and the world's largest association of psychologists, with nearly 130,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students as its members.

We applaud you for introducing legislation in the area of preventative health care for Medicare patients whom are obese and have weight management issues. Obesity is a major national health concern and disease which contributes to the risk of developing other chronic, and often costly, health conditions; including diabetes, depression and heart disease, and can negatively impact an individual's mortality. Psychologists, as key Medicare mental and behavioral health service providers, are experts in the diagnosis, assessment and treatment of health risk behaviors and help fight obesity through behavioral interventions and counseling programs.

The Treat and Reduce Obesity Act would give the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) the authority to expand the provision of the Medicare benefit for Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) for Obesity to additional types of providers, including clinical psychologists, physicians who are not primary care physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and registered dietitians or nutrition professionals. As you well know, this Medicare preventative care

750 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002-4242
(202) 336-5913
(202) 336-5797 Fax
(202) 336-6123 TDD

Katherine C. Nordal, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Web: www.APApractice.org



Please Recycle

An affiliate of the American Psychological Association

service is generally limited now to primary care physicians. Psychologists are well positioned to promote health behavior change, and the inclusion of psychologists in this Medicare benefit is a welcomed supplement.

Additionally, your legislation would allow CMS to expand Medicare Part D to provide coverage of FDA-approved prescription drugs for chronic weight management, and require the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to develop and implement a plan to coordinate the agencies' programs to treat, reduce and prevent obesity in the adult population.

APAPO shares your vision in improving the health of obese and overweight Medicare beneficiaries, and is committed to expanding psychology's role in advancing a patient's overall health and promoting health behavior change.

Thank you for your leadership on this important initiative. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act as soon as possible. Please contact my staff members Doug Walter, J.D., Associate Executive Director, Government Relations at dwalter@apa.org or Laurel Stine, J.D., Director of Congressional Relations at lstine@apa.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Katherine C. Nordal Ph.D." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Katherine C. Nordal, Ph.D.
Executive Director for Professional Practice
American Psychological Association Practice Organization