



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

July 10, 2013

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator:

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), representing over 110,600 physicians and medical students nationwide, is pleased to support the *Treat and Reduce Obesity Act* (S. 1184). We applaud your bipartisan legislation that would increase vital access and reimbursement for obesity screening and counseling services. S. 1184 would allow qualified health practitioners, including family physicians, to be reimbursed for providing intensive behavioral therapy for obesity to Medicare beneficiaries. In addition, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) would be required to distribute information about intensive behavioral therapy for obesity to Medicare recipients and their doctors, so that they are aware of this valuable service. The bill also would reimburse physicians and eligible providers for pharmacological interventions for chronic obesity management given to those who are obese or overweight and suffer from one or more related conditions.

Family physicians, as primary care physicians, understand the challenges that overweight and obese patients face and are in a unique position to employ a long-term, patient-centered approach to obesity and weight management. For many years, the AAFP has recommended that our members screen patients for obesity and offer intensive counseling and behavioral interventions to promote sustained weight loss. The AAFP also recommends that third-party payers reimburse physicians for reasonable and necessary diagnosis and treatment. Your legislation would help achieve these goals.

The AAFP commends you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you to improve healthcare for all Americans. Please contact Mark Cribben (mcribber@aafp.org) in our Washington, D.C. office if we can be of more assistance.

Sincerely,

Glen R. Stream, MD, MBI, FAAFP
Board Chair

www.aafp.org

President

Jeffrey J. Cain, MD
Denver, CO

President-elect

Reid B. Blackwelder, MD
Kingsport, TN

Board Chair

Glen Stream, MD
Spokane, WA

Directors

Barbara Doty, MD, Wasilla, AK
Richard Madden, Jr., MD, Belen, NM
Robert Wergin, MD, Milford, NE
Wanda D. Filer, MD, York, PA
Rebecca Jaffee, MD, Wilmington, DE
Daniel R. Spogen, MD, Reno, NV

Carlos Gonzales, MD, Patagonia, AZ
H. Clifton Knight, MD, Indianapolis, IN
Lloyd Van Winkle, MD, Castroville, TX
Ravi Grivois-Shah, MD, (New Physician Member), Oak Park, IL
Sarah Tully Marks, MD, (Resident Member), Shorewood, WI
Aaron Meyer (Student Member), St. Louis, MO

Speaker

John S. Meigs, Jr., MD
Brent, AL

Vice Speaker

Javette C. Orgain, MD
Chicago, IL

Executive Vice President

Douglas E. Henley, MD
Leawood, KS