



4511 North Himes Ave., Suite 250
Tampa, FL 33614

(800) 717-3117
(813) 872-7835
Fax: (813) 873-7838

info@obesityaction.org
www.obesityaction.org

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

James Zervios
Director of Communications
(800) 717-3117
jzervios@obesityaction.org

**OBESITY ACTION COALITION CALLS ON PETA
TO IMMEDIATELY END CAMPAIGN STIGMATIZING OVERWEIGHT AND OBESE INDIVIDUALS**

Tampa, Fla. – The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) has called on the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) to immediately end its campaign for the promotion of vegetarianism due to its stigmatizing image and portrayal of obese/overweight individuals. The OAC believes this campaign is completely inappropriate as no individual should be stigmatized based on their size or weight.

The campaign boasts a billboard with the text “Save the Whales – Lose the Blubber: Go Vegetarian” and features an image of an overweight woman in a bikini. “This campaign blatantly stigmatizes the overweight and obese. The OAC fails to find the informational value of promoting vegetarianism through the hurtfulness of mocking the obese,” said Joseph Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO.

With more than 93 million Americans affected by obesity, this type of unacceptable stigmatization of obese/overweight individuals has no place in today’s society. Obese individuals are often stigmatized or discriminated against in a variety of areas, such as employment, school, healthcare and much more. The OAC finds obesity stigma to be extremely detrimental to the obese population as it furthers the all-too-frequent negative perceptions of the obese. The OAC demands PETA immediately end the campaign and remove the billboard from the public domain and the PETA Web site. In addition, the OAC is currently encouraging its Coalition members to respond directly to PETA about this inappropriate campaign. If you are not a member of the Coalition, but would also like to respond, please visit the OAC Web site at www.obesityaction.org for more information.

A 12,000 member strong nonprofit continually succeeds as the only obesity individual-focused organization. The OAC has been instrumental in many national and state-based issues throughout the past four years. Perhaps the most notable moment in the OAC’s history was the hosting of the *Walk from Obesity – Walk on the Capitol* where nearly 3,000 individuals left an ever-standing imprint in Washington, DC, for obesity rights and awareness.

The OAC is a non-profit organization, consisting of members affected by obesity in all 50 states, dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of those affected by obesity, morbid obesity and childhood obesity. The OAC’s focus is unique as it represents the views, interests and rights of the nearly 1/3 of all Americans who are personally affected by obesity.

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The mission of the Obesity Action Coalition is to elevate and empower those affected by obesity through education, advocacy and support.