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Governor Rick Perry
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

I am writing to request your assistance in improving access to obesity management services, including bariatric surgery (weight-loss surgery), currently denied to many Texans.

The OAC is a non-profit patient organization dedicated to educating and advocating for those affected by obesity. It is our mission to elevate and empower those affected by obesity through education, advocacy and support. By strictly representing the interests and concerns of obese patients, the OAC is a unique organization.

Obesity is a serious health epidemic that targets one in four Americans. Those affected by obesity often experience or are at a much higher risk for a variety of obesity related illnesses including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, respiratory problems and some cancers (endometrial, breast and colon). In Texas, more than 5.3 million are considered obese (30 pounds or more overweight) and more than one million are considered morbidly obese (100 pounds or more over ideal body weight). It is estimated that Texas' obese population accounted for more than \$5.34 billion in medical costs related to their obesity.

As you may be aware, most Texas-based insurers and employers, including the state of Texas through both its state-employee benefit and Medicaid programs, do not provide or have eliminated insurance coverage for obesity management services, including bariatric surgery. The OAC believes that this decision negatively impacts the quality of health and life of the citizens of Texas by denying them access to needed medical care. Obesity is a complex disease requiring treatment. The medical treatment of obesity decreases mortality, improves or resolves obesity related illnesses and improves quality of life. Denying patients and their physicians proven options for treatment (medical nutrition therapy, medical weight management and weight-loss surgery) is an ill-advised, short-term economic decision by Texas-based insurers and employers that endangers the long-term health of many Texans.

The OAC respectfully requests your assistance and advice in convincing Texas-based insurers and employers to provide access to obesity management services and bariatric surgery. Your support in this matter would be greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information or be of assistance on any other obesity-related issues. I can be reached via phone at (800) 717-3117 or e-mail at jnadglowski@obesityaction.org. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski", written over a white background.

Joseph Nadglowski Jr.
President & CEO

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