CELEBRATE

The OAC Celebrates its 10 Year Anniversary – Stand with Us Today!

“Doctor, I feel like my weight is starting to affect my health.”

“Well, maybe you should push away from the table and get a little more active.”

“Fat people are not allowed at buffet restaurants anymore!”

“You know what? You did it to yourself! Why should I pay for your weight?”
States such as these would’ve been completely acceptable 10 years ago. In fact, these statements would’ve not only been accepted, but also not refuted in any way, shape or form. Today, that is absolutely not the case because you have 50,000 passionate individuals ready, willing and able to proudly stand with the Nation’s leading organization representing individuals affected by the disease of obesity – the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC).

How it All Began

Most individuals do not know the backstory to how the OAC was developed. In 2005, the OAC was founded when, at a meeting of legislators, one elected official stood up and said, “I can eliminate access to obesity surgery in my state today and not a single person would stop me.” In that sentence, the reason for the OAC’s existence was born. Shortly after that, healthcare professionals Robin Blackstone, MD; Georgeann Mallory, RD; and Christopher Still, DO, FACN, FACP, worked with industry representatives to lay the framework for what would become a first-of-its-kind non-profit organization whose sole focus would be to represent individuals impacted by the disease of obesity.

“All of the professional societies for obesity were in existence, yet we realized that we were not hearing what is arguably the most important voice – the patient voice. Creating the framework for the OAC is something that I hold near and dear to my heart. To see this organization grow to what it is today is simply amazing,”

— Christopher Still, DO, FACN, FACP, OAC Board Member Emeritus
Starting with a small staff of three full-time employees in Tampa, Fla., and a handful of National Board Members, the OAC quickly dove headfirst into taking on important issues such as weight-based discriminatory policies by retail giant Walmart, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee’s IQ testing requirements to access bariatric surgery and much more.

“The early days for the OAC were interesting,” said Joe Nadglowski, OAC President/CEO, “nobody could argue that individuals affected by this disease were often overlooked and ignored in day-to-day life, work, healthcare and more; however, we would often find a blatant disregard for individuals dealing with weight issues.”

Within its first year, thousands of individuals joined the OAC. You could easily tell buzz was growing and that for the first time, an organization existed that would stand-up for obesity rights and advocate with a passionate voice for all those affected.

OAC Growth and Success

Throughout the next 10 years, the OAC would become a staple in the healthcare community and general public. From visiting the White House to meet with the First Lady’s staff on childhood obesity, to hosting the Inaugural Your Weight Matters National Convention, to distributing more than one million pieces of educational information, the OAC continued to see unparalleled success on many fronts.

“I don’t know that anyone was prepared for the following that the OAC would generate at such an early stage in its life,” said Pam Davis, RN, CBN, MBA, OAC Past-Chairman, “people from all throughout the United States, and even overseas, were interested in joining the Coalition and helping us spread the word about obesity.”

For the first time in history, individuals affected by obesity had a voice. They had a voice shouting back at weight bias. They had a voice telling their healthcare provider that they needed more than an age-old advice of “eat less and move more.” They had a voice advocating for new obesity treatments and access to evidence-based weight-loss options. Simply stated – for the first time, they had a VOICE!
The Future of the OAC – The Future of YOU!

Since its inception, the OAC has seen many successes on many fronts; however, none of these successes would have been achievable without the support of the most important component in the OAC – the membership. Standing with more than 50,000 members nationwide, the OAC has become a mighty force to be reckoned with, and this is why you matter.

“Serving as Chairman of the OAC has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life,” said Ted Kyle, RPh, MBA, OAC Chairman, “from attending Your Weight Matters Conventions to advocating on behalf of our membership on Capitol Hill, I cannot help but have a sense of dedication and responsibility to this organization. Seeing where we’ve gone in 10 years excites me because I can only dream of where we will be in the next 10”

As we look ahead to the next 10 years, it is you, as an OAC supporter, who will help us continue to fight for the rights and needs of all individuals affected by obesity. We, the OAC, are making a commitment to you that we will stand with you and help you along your journey toward improved health. In return, we ask that you make the commitment to stand with us.

For the remainder of 2015, the OAC will be asking all individuals throughout the United States to stand with us and sign the OAC’s pledge to commit yourself to the organization. For more information on how you can be a part of this one-of-a-kind opportunity, please see the below box.

In 2005, the OAC was formed when a legislator stood up at a meeting and called for the creation of an organization that would be the first of its kind: an organization representing individuals with obesity. For the past 10 years, the OAC has stood for YOU and for ALL individuals affected by this disease.

Whether it has been passionately advocating for access to obesity treatment and care; standing up to weight bias; supporting individuals who found themselves unrepresented and without a voice; or providing the RIGHT information through our evidence-based education, the OAC has stood strong as THE organization for individuals with obesity.

We pledge to continue to stand up for the more than 93 million Americans with obesity. Now, we need YOU to pledge to stand with us as we fight for a better world for those affected by this disease:

- A world free of weight bias
- A world where individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their size or weight
- A world where those who are affected by obesity have the right to access safe and effective treatment options

Help the OAC build momentum for the future by signing our “I Stand with the OAC” pledge at:

www.ObesityAction.org/10Years
**OAC Membership Application**

**Why Join the OAC?** The OAC is a nearly 50,000 member-strong 501(c)(3) National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to the individual affected by the disease of obesity and helping individuals along their journey toward better health through education, advocacy, and support. Our core focuses are to raise awareness and improve access to the prevention and treatment of obesity, provide evidence-based education on obesity and its treatments, fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination, elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health and offer a community of support for the individual affected.

1. **OAC Membership Categories (select one)**
   - Individual Membership: $20/year
   - Institutional Membership: $500/year
   - Chairman’s Council Membership: $1000+/year

Are you joining for the first time, or are you renewing your OAC Membership?
   - I am joining for the first time (never been an OAC member).
   - I am renewing my membership (have joined the OAC in the past).

2. **Donation Add-on**
   **Add-on Donation: Make a General Donation**
   Make a tax-deductible donation to the OAC when joining as a member. Your donation helps the OAC’s educational and advocacy efforts.
   - $5
   - $10
   - $25
   - $50
   - $100
   - Other ________

3. **Membership/Donation Add-on Totals:**
   - Membership Fee: +$_______
   - Donation Add-on (optional): +$_______
   - **TOTAL PAYMENT:** $_________

---

**Payment Information**

- Check (payable to the OAC) for $______
- Credit card for my TOTAL, including add-ons, of $_____
  - Discover®
  - MasterCard®
  - Visa®
  - AmEx®
  - Credit Card Number: __________________________
  - Expiration Date: __________________________
  - Billing Zip Code: __________________________
  - CV Code: __________

**Contact Information**

Name: __________________________
Address: __________________________
City: __________________________ State: __________________________ Zip: __________
Phone: __________________________ Email: __________________________

JOIN ONLINE! To join the OAC online, please visit **www.ObesityAction.org** and click on the “Get Involved” tab.

---

**BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP**

- Official welcome letter and membership card
- Annual subscription to the OAC’s publication, *Your Weight Matters* Magazine
- Subscriptions to the OAC Members Make a Difference and Obesity Action Alert monthly e-newsletters
- “Bias Buster” Alerts, altering specifically to issues of weight bias
- Immediate Advocacy Alerts on urgent advocacy issues and access to the OAC’s expert advocacy team
- Ability to lend your voice to the cause