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Drug Use Research & Management Program
Oregon State University
500 Summer Street NE, E35
Salem, Oregon 97301-1079

RE: Drug Effectiveness Review Project Summary Report – Pharmacologic Agents for Weight Management

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Oregon State University drug effectiveness review of medications for weight management. The OAC is a national non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by the disease of obesity. We are pleased OSU is giving obesity serious consideration and review to improve evidence-based care, which should include coverage for intensive behavioral therapy, metabolic/bariatric surgery, and FDA-approved anti-obesity medications.

The OAC proudly serves about 1,000 members living in Oregon and backed by more than 85,000 members across the United States. We applaud this legislation, as it improves access to obesity care and updates state policies into alignment with advances in science and clinical standards. Throughout the past decades, the prevalence of obesity has skyrocketed across our country and in Oregon – with 31 percent of adults and more than 14.5 percent of children (ages 10- 17) in the state currently affected by obesity.

There are multiple evidence-based treatments for people with obesity that mitigate the impacts of the disease and improve health outcomes. Unfortunately, the present landscape of obesity treatment coverage remains piecemeal and laden with arbitrary hurdles to receive comprehensive care. We applaud Oregon for moving to eliminate barriers to care – both for the long term and immediate health of those affected by obesity.

Since 2013, when the American Medical Association adopted formal policy declaring obesity as a complex and chronic disease and supporting patient access to the full continuum of evidence based obesity care, numerous federal and state policy organizations have echoed the AMA's position. These include the National Council of Insurance Legislators, National Lieutenant Governors Association, National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators, and the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, and the Federal Office of Personnel Management.

Further, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released their evidence-based recommendations on medical care for those age 2 and older as part of its new "Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for the Evaluation and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Obesity." The AAP guidelines contain key action statements, which represent evidence-based recommendations for evaluating and treating children with overweight and obesity and related health concerns. These recommendations include motivational interviewing, intensive health behavior and lifestyle treatment, pharmacotherapy and metabolic and bariatric surgery. The approach considers the child's health status, family system, community context, and resources. The comprehensive evidence-based

recommendations included in the CPG reflect just how far the understanding and care of childhood obesity has come and Oregon should be applauded for its forward thinking on obesity care – especially for those most in need.

Obesity is a complex chronic disease that extends beyond individual lifestyle choices to encompass a broader landscape of social determinants and systemic factors, contributing significantly to health inequities. Disparities in obesity rates are often closely intertwined with socioeconomic status, geographic location, and access to resources. Individuals in marginalized communities may face barriers to affordable and nutritious food options, safe spaces for physical activity, and unequal access to qualified providers of quality healthcare. These structural inequities exacerbate the prevalence of obesity among vulnerable populations, leading to a cycle of poor health outcomes. Tackling obesity requires a comprehensive approach.

Our country must acknowledge obesity for the chronic disease that it is and take steps to treat it in the same serious fashion as other chronic disease states such as diabetes and hypertension. As a voice for people living with obesity, OAC looks forward to working with the state of Oregon to ensure Medicaid recipients access to comprehensive obesity care for this complex and chronic disease.

We would be happy to meet and share further information and perspectives of people living with obesity. Should you have questions or need additional information, please reach out to our Policy Advisor, Chris Gallagher at chris@potomaccurrents.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.
OAC President and CEO