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April 17, 2024

The Honorable Todd Huston
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Indiana Statehouse
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Dear Speaker Huston:

On behalf of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), we request your support and recommendation for a study that would address the impact of obesity on the State of Indiana and its citizens. It is critical that we understand how providing coverage for comprehensive obesity care can benefit the health of Hoosiers as well as the state's workforce and economy.

The OAC is the leading national non-profit dedicated to serving people living with obesity through awareness, support, education, and advocacy. Our vision is to create a society where all individuals are treated with respect and without discrimination or bias regardless of their size or weight. We strive for those affected by the disease of obesity to have the right to access safe and effective treatment options. OAC has a strong and growing membership of more than 80,000 individuals across the United States and 2,957 members in Indiana.

Obesity is a growing chronic disease in Indiana with more than 37% of the population living with the disease and another 34% with overweight. Altogether, that's more than 71% of people living in Indiana who experience overweight or obesity.¹ Obesity rates are increasing across the country because we know this disease is driven by strong biology, not by choice and is often the root cause and driver of other health complications. A recent report found that treating obesity can reduce diabetes (-8.9%), hypertension (-2.3%), heart disease (-2.6%), cancer (-1.3%), and disability (-4.7%) over 10 years in private insurance coverage and Medicare.

Another report, authored by GlobalData found that in 2022, obesity's total impact on Indiana's economy included a \$9.3 billion reduction in economic activity, \$966 million in detrimental impact to the state's budget, and \$1.2 billion in higher medical expenditures paid by employers. This study also found significant impact on the state's labor force, including a reduction in the labor force of 69,400 adults.² Obesity disproportionately affects women. Women with larger bodies suffer 20% lower odds of being employed, and when employed, tend to earn 9% less than women with healthy weight.

OAC supports further study of the economic, health, and social impact of obesity, including the enablement of comprehensive, evidence-based approaches and care of obesity and obesity-related diseases such heart

The mission of the Obesity Action Coalition is to elevate and empower those affected by obesity

disease, diabetes, mobility, and mental health. We look forward to being a resource for this effort and appreciate your consideration of this request.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel to contact me or OAC Policy Consultant Chris Gallagher via email at chris@potomaccurrents.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.
OAC President and CEO

¹ Trust for America's Health 2023 Report on the State of Obesity

² 2023 GlobalData Report on Obesity's Impact on Indiana's Economy and Labor Force