

An Open Letter to the FDA Regarding Obesity Treatments from the Obesity Action Coalition

October 12, 2010

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Attn: Margaret Hamburg, FDA Commissioner
10903 New Hampshire Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20993



Dear FDA Commissioner Hamburg:

On behalf of the more than 18,000 members of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), we ask the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to utilize a balanced approval process in evaluating new and promising medications, to be used in conjunction with diet and exercise, to help treat Americans affected by obesity.

The FDA is on the verge of making critical decisions regarding three new drug applications for the treatment of the disease of obesity. Never before, and possibly never again, has there been this level of interest about the possible arrival of medical treatment tools and their potential to improve the quality of health and life for those affected by obesity.

In an ideal world, such medications would be unnecessary, but unfortunately we do not live in such a world. More than one-third of Americans are affected by obesity, leading to nearly \$150 billion in excess medical costs and much more in personal costs. Obesity affects nearly every organ system in the body and is often the cause of conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, pulmonary disease and multiple cancers. While many treatments have been developed and approved to address the multitude of obesity-related conditions, the same is not true regarding obesity itself.

New evidence-based treatment approaches for the disease of obesity must be subject to, and judged by, the same approval criteria as new treatments for other major diseases. Unfortunately, there are relatively few treatment options available for those impacted by obesity even though obesity is an epidemic in our country. Should the FDA fail to approve any of these three new obesity medications, we believe that will clearly indicate that the FDA has chosen a double standard for evaluating and approving treatment options for this disease. Such an outcome will leave even fewer treatment options for those who struggle with obesity and will likely further discourage any research and development in the area of obesity ever again.

Studies have shown the tremendous health improvement that can come from even losing modest amounts of weight, yet individuals may never again have access to therapies to improve their health through weight-loss. Major pharmaceutical companies have already terminated their research programs for this disease. Please help reverse this trend. We need more, not fewer, tools to manage this nationwide epidemic effectively. This is a very urgent matter. We hope the FDA makes a fair and balanced decision on these medical treatments currently under review to help the millions of Americans affected by obesity.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Barbara Thompson in black ink.

Barbara Thompson
Chairman of the Board

Handwritten signature of Joseph Nadglowski, Jr. in black ink.

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.
President and CEO

OAC'S CALL TO ACTION:

The OAC's Call to the FDA:

Evaluate Obesity Treatments as Fairly as You Do for Treatments of Other Major Disease States.

The OAC's Call to the PUBLIC:

Sign Our Petition to the FDA Urging a Fair and Balanced Decision on the Medical Treatments for Obesity.

Visit www.obesityaction.org/fda.php to
Sign the Petition and Raise Your Voice!

Here's Why We **NEED** More Obesity Treatments

- Obesity affects 93 million Americans
- There are relatively few available medical treatment options for individuals impacted by obesity
- Diet and exercise alone does not work for everyone
- Losing just 5 to 10 percent of body weight can dramatically improve health
- There are more than 30 medical conditions associated with obesity, including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obstructive sleep apnea and many more

About the Obesity Action Coalition

The OAC is a National Non Profit Organization dedicated to helping and representing individuals affected by the disease of obesity. The OAC educates individuals on obesity and its related conditions and also conducts a variety of advocacy initiatives on the state and federal level.



The OAC believes that prevention and treatment are equally important in solving the obesity epidemic; and with treatment, individuals need access to safe and effective options.