

OAC Turns 20

Leading the Fight Since 2005

by McKinzie Burrows, OAC Senior Communications Manager

Flashback to 2005—YouTube saw its first video upload, Carrie Underwood won American Idol, and platforms like Facebook and Myspace were rapidly expanding. That spring, during a meeting of U.S. legislators in Washington, DC, someone recognized a significant gap: there was no unified patient advocacy group focused solely on representing individuals affected by the disease of obesity. This realization sparked the idea for the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), and our journey began with the goal to ensure that the experiences and needs of people with obesity were both seen and addressed.



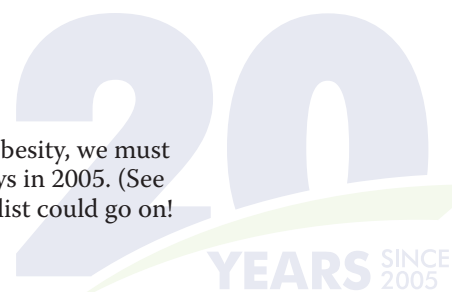
It's Our Birth(year)!

In 2025, the OAC is proud to celebrate two decades of education, advocacy, awareness and support as we mark our 20th Anniversary! This milestone comes at an exciting time in the obesity space. Today, we're witnessing a radical shift in how obesity is understood and addressed around the world. More people recognize obesity as a chronic, complex disease, innovative treatment options are emerging and policymakers are beginning to take meaningful steps toward equitable and affordable access to obesity care.

The OAC has been at the forefront of this progress—leading public conversations, driving daily efforts and working tirelessly behind the scenes to create change.



What 20 Years Have Built



While there's still work to be done to achieve our vision of a better world for people with obesity, we must take this moment to reflect on and celebrate all we've accomplished since our founding days in 2005. (See page "12" for our full history timeline.) These are just a few of the highlights. Trust us, the list could go on!

Education

- **Weight Matters Magazine:** Our flagship publication has distributed more than one million copies of supportive educational content on obesity, weight management, nutrition, mental health and more.
- **Your Weight Matters Events:** From our flagship National Convention in 2012 to our first Virtual Convention in 2020 and our first Regional meetings in 2024, the OAC's *Your Weight Matters* Events have offered science-based, expert-led education on weight, delivering resources and insights like no other.
- **Online Resource Library:** We've built a comprehensive digital library with more than 1,000 articles, guides and videos to support individuals seeking help with obesity-related health topics.

Awareness

- **High-Impact Campaigns:** Initiatives like Obesity Care Week, Stop Weight Bias and the *Your Weight Matters* Challenge have reached millions, elevating conversations about obesity care, stigma, weight and health worldwide.
- **Media Representation:** The OAC has consulted on an Oscar-winning film, worked with thousands of media outlets to share stories of individuals impacted by obesity, and has even met with Oprah and Queen Latifah!
- **Obesity as a Disease:** We've played a pivotal role in advocating for the societal recognition of obesity as a chronic, complex disease.

Advocacy

- **Landmark Policy Wins:** The OAC has been a driving force in advancing both state and national obesity legislation to expand access to obesity care, such as state insurance policies and progress with the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA).
- **Fighting Stigma:** We've challenged weight bias at every level—from media and healthcare settings to public policy. We've advocated for People-First Language, launched two bias-free image galleries, fought discriminatory workplace/school policies and even outlined the ideal patient experience.
- **Capitol Hill Advocacy:** The OAC has led 10+ National Advocacy Days and delivered expert testimonies at Congress and federal hearings to fight for better obesity care.

Support

- **Building Community:** Events like the *Your Weight Matters* National Convention and Regional meetings have built strong, supportive communities helping individuals feel less alone in their health journeys.
- **Virtual Support:** We launched virtual Zoom support chats and a discussion forum to provide empowering spaces for individuals to connect, share experiences and find encouragement on their journeys.
- **Obesity Care Providers Locator:** We made finding science-based obesity care easier with a user-friendly search tool at ObesityCareProviders.com.

Be a Part of 20 More!

As we celebrate our 20th Anniversary, we invite you to be part of our journey and step into the next chapter with us! There are several ways you can get involved with the OAC. Visit ObesityAction.org/20-years to learn more about our history, see what 20th Anniversary events are coming up and take action to support our cause.

With your support, the next 20 years will bring even more accomplishments to look back on!

Join the OAC Community

Not an OAC Community Member yet? Join today for free and get access to valuable resources in education, advocacy and support! For just \$20 this year in honor of our 20th Anniversary, upgrade to Community+ and enjoy exclusive benefits like early event access, special resources, Virtual Support Chats and more. Join today at ObesityAction.org/community.

Make a Donation

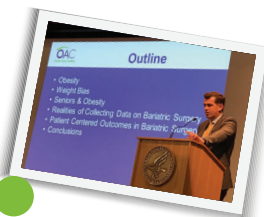
Your support drives the OAC's mission of education, awareness, advocacy and support. Donate \$20 in celebration of our 20th Anniversary, or contribute any amount that fits your budget. Every gift helps us continue making a positive impact in the lives of those affected by obesity. Visit ObesityAction.org/donate

20 Years of Impact

We've been busy over the last two decades!
Here's a glance at some of our biggest milestones and memories.

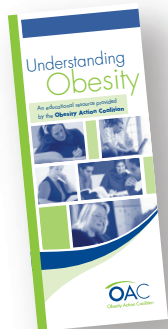


OAC was founded after a meeting of legislators identified a need for a group to represent patients affected by obesity.



2006

OAC releases its first educational resource, the *Understanding Obesity* Brochure.



2007

OAC achieves its first major advocacy win by getting BCBS Tennessee to rescind the IQ testing requirement before bariatric surgery.

OAC visits Congress for the first time to advocate for obesity care.

2008

1 million educational resources shared across the country.

2010

With help from OAC advocacy, the Affordable Care Act ensures obesity can no longer be considered a pre-existing condition, preventing discrimination in insurance coverage.

OAC launches the *Your Weight Matters Campaign* and first-ever PSA to empower individuals to talk about weight and health with a healthcare provider.

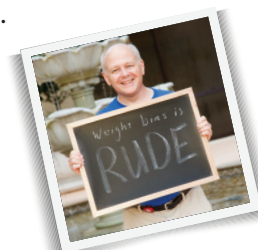
OAC provides first FDA hearing testimony on obesity-related issues.

OAC visits the White House to advocate for improved access to obesity care and treatments.



2011

OAC launches a 'Bias Busters' campaign to combat weight bias and stigma.



2012

OAC hosts its inaugural *Your Weight Matters National Convention* in Dallas, TX, bringing together individuals wanting information, resources and support for their weight and health journey.



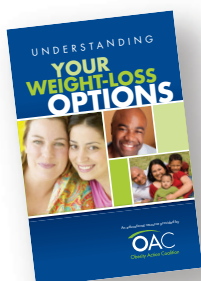
2013

The American Medical Association (AMA) recognizes obesity as a disease, a major advocacy win for OAC.

2014

OAC debuts the *Understanding Your Weight Loss Options* Brochure.

OAC launches the *Your Weight Matters National Convention Scholarship Program* to support attendance for individuals in need.



2015

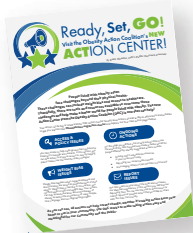
OAC becomes a founding member of the Obesity Care Advocacy Network (OCAN), strengthening collaborative efforts to improve obesity care.





2017

OAC provides eight bariatric surgeries to patients in need during Obesity Care Week.



2019

OAC launches the OAC Action Center, an online resource to help individuals get involved in local, state and national advocacy efforts.



2021

OAC launches an online Resource Library with hundreds of articles, guides and videos for individuals affected by obesity.

2022

OAC expands state advocacy programs to strengthen its grassroots efforts.

OAC consults filmmakers and Brendan Fraser on his Oscar-winning portrayal of a person affected by severe obesity in "The Whale."



2024

YOURWEIGHTMATTERS REGIONAL

OAC launches *Your Weight Matters* Regional events, providing science-based education about weight and health to communities across the country.

OAC launches its second image gallery, the Stop Weight Bias Image Gallery, to combat weight bias in the media with alternative options to stigmatizing imagery.

OAC's advocacy efforts help advance the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) farther than it's ever gone before in Congress.

The Biden Administration announces a Proposed Rule to expand access to obesity medications under Medicare and Medicaid—a significant step forward.

2016

Obesity Care Week debuts, with OAC as a Founding Champion.

OAC launches its first free commercial image gallery to combat weight stigma in the media with respectful, humanizing images.

2018

OAC Community launches, offering a space for individuals to learn, connect and support each other.

OAC launches **ObesityCareProviders.com** to help individuals find healthcare providers trained in obesity care.

2020

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) adopts People-First Language and lists OAC as a trusted resource.

OAC hosts its first *Your Weight Matters* Virtual Convention to provide science-based weight and health education to a broader audience.

OAC launches the Stop Weight Bias Campaign to raise awareness, put a stop to weight bias and push equality forward.

OAC debuts OAC TV, which now includes Health Talks, Fresh Perspectives and other digital education resources.



2023

OAC hosts 13 families at its National Convention as part of its "Empower Early" initiative.

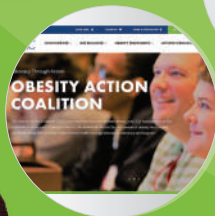


20
YEARS SINCE 2005



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



PUBLIC EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



ANNUAL CONVENTION



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



VIBRANT COMMUNITY

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
- Community Discussion Forum
- Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO [OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN](https://obesityaction.org/join)

info@obesityaction.org

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



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