



March 6, 2009

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Barack Obama:

On behalf of the nearly 12,000 members of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), I applaud you for bringing together policymakers and interest groups for the March 5th White House Forum on Health Reform. Both yesterday's Forum and the release of "Americans Speak on Health Reform: A Report on Health Care Community Discussions," illustrate your administration's strong commitment to reforming our country's healthcare system. Although the OAC was pleased with the discussions that took place at the Forum, we were disappointed by the noticeable absence of an obesity-specific group.

The OAC was pleased that so many of the participants "at the table" highlighted the fact that obesity is a major issue in our country that needs to be addressed. We were also heartened that so many Americans touched on this issue in the Report on Health Care Community Discussions. For example, a home gathering in Larchmont, New York, reported, "The group agrees that the country needs to treat obesity as an epidemic taking over the nation." Clearly, the healthcare community, policymakers, employers, health insurance providers and the American people realize that obesity is a major issue that must be tackled.

With this in mind, the OAC was disappointed with yesterday's White House Forum because of the noticeable absence of any organization representing the interests of individuals affected by obesity. As you know, obesity is a complex disease – with the obese and morbidly obese often experiencing a wide variety of other health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer and sleep apnea. We believe that government should take the same serious action regarding obesity as it does with other disease states. Government needs to tap into existing resources, organizations and individuals affected in order to gain a clear understanding of obesity and proven prevention and treatment methods. We are that resource and are hopeful that your administration will include the Obesity Action Coalition in future discussions on health reform.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski".

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.
President and CEO

About the OAC: The OAC is a national non-profit organization comprised primarily of individuals who have been personally affected by obesity. In addition, our membership includes more than 1,000 healthcare providers who care for those affected. Our strong belief is that obesity, like other diseases, must be both prevented and treated. Those who are currently obese, or at risk for developing obesity, and are ready to make a change in their lives should have expanded access to both prevention and treatment avenues.

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