

ADVOCACY NEWS

ADVOCACY ACTION



OAC and Patients Bring National Attention to *Discriminatory* Mississippi House Bill 282

House Bill 282 at a Glance

On Friday, February 1, the OAC became aware of Mississippi legislation targeting those affected by obesity and morbid obesity.

The legislation, titled “House Bill 282,” clearly stated that members of the Mississippi House of Representatives were seeking an act to prohibit certain food establishments from serving food to any person who is obese based on criteria prescribed by the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Reaction to the Bill

Upon reading HB 282, the OAC and patients throughout the country immediately mobilized and issued statements expressing their disappointment with the bill and the legislators.

From an organizational standpoint, the OAC disseminated a news release nationwide calling on the state of Mississippi House of Representatives to withdraw HB 282. This bill clearly discriminated against those affected by obesity by restricting their right to dine in restaurants.

Prior to the bill being deemed “dead,” OAC President/CEO Joseph Nadglowski, Jr., appeared on the CBS Early Show, along with Representative Read, who was a co-author of this Bill. This National appearance brought widespread discussion about the Bill and its effects on the obese population.

The OAC strongly felt that HB 282 was outright discrimination against the obese population and an example of the often misguided attempts proposed to address the obesity epidemic. In fact, studies have demonstrated that discrimi-

nation, ridicule and/or stigma against the obese do not lower obesity rates. Instead, the opposite is true. Those that are the victims of stigma and/or discrimination are more likely to engage in unhealthy eating behaviors.

Advocacy at Work

For one of the first times in history, once the obesity community was discriminated against, it immediately responded with passion and dedication. It was the determination of all those affected by this disease, especially Mississippians, that brought this issue to the national media and assisted in illustrating the discriminatory aspects of HB 282.

Looking Ahead

Each and every day examples of discrimination such as that found in HB 282 are perpetuated and proposed in society. It is up to us, the patients and the OAC, to make a difference and stop this type of stigma.

Advocating to your state representative and letting them know the issues in your state regarding access to care and fair treatment for the obese is extremely important. We must demonstrate the need for access to safe and effective treatment options.

Obesity is a serious health epidemic that targets one in three Americans. It is estimated that more than 93 million Americans are obese, with that number predicted to climb to 120 million in the next five years.

For more information on HB 282, please visit the “Advocacy” section on the OAC Web site at www.obesityaction.org.



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.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

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

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