

AdvocacyNews AdvocacyAction

BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Rescinds IQ Testing Requirement for Those Seeking Weight-Loss Surgery

*Often, people ask, "Does advocacy work?"
The answer, YES!*

A recent example of advocacy in action can be seen in relation to Blue-Cross BlueShield of Tennessee (BC/BS of Tenn.) and their IQ testing requirement for those seeking weight-loss surgery. This issue was brought to the OAC's attention by a patient who was attempting to gain access to treatment for their obesity and was asked to take an IQ test prior to treatment.

Requiring an IQ test to access any medical procedure is wrong and by implementing such a requirement, BC/BS of Tenn. set a dangerous precedent of denying healthcare based on intelligence testing. Furthermore, this decision further perpetuated the negative stigma often associated with obesity.

In late 2006, the OAC issued multiple letters to BC/BS of Tenn. requesting that they rescind their decision for IQ testing. Unfortunately, BC/BS of Tenn. did not respond.

As the story began to gain interest, the OAC issued a national news release asking BC/BS of Tenn. to rescind their decision to administer IQ testing in order to gain access to treatment for weight-loss surgery. In addition, the OAC called on its constituents to take action and raise their voice.

Soon after the news release received national media attention by Fox News and many other media outlets, BC/BS of Tenn. decided to stop all IQ testing and removed the requirement from their insurance policy.

The elimination of the IQ testing requirement was a proactive step in the right direction for those seeking to access the much needed medical care of obesity.

Conclusion:

The success of the elimination of the IQ testing is a clear example of advocacy in action. The OAC and its constituents quickly addressed an issue that clearly affected and discriminated against all those affected by obesity trying to access care. This victory made it very apparent that your letters, phone calls and e-mails make a tremendous difference.

In recent weeks, the OAC has put a call out to all patients to provide the OAC with some of the more unusual experiences with accessing

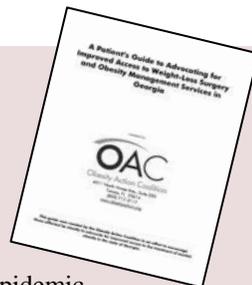


treatment. Do you know of an insurance provider's policy that contains an unusual requirement? If so, please send a copy of the policy with the requirement highlighted to the OAC National Office. Once we receive the policy, the OAC will research the policy for further information. For more information please, contact the OAC National Office at (800) 717-3117 or visit www.obesityaction.org.

Are you having state-based access to care issues?

From its inception, the OAC has targeted different states facing access to care issues for the obese and morbidly obese. The OAC developed state-specific guides to further educate citizens about the obesity epidemic and provide them with the tools needed to begin advocating for access to treatment. Thus far, the OAC has guides for the following states:

- Alaska
- Arizona
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- Indiana
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia
- Wisconsin





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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