

# CELEBRATE



## The OAC Celebrates its 10 Year Anniversary – Stand with Us Today!

**“Doctor, I feel like my weight is starting to affect my health.”**

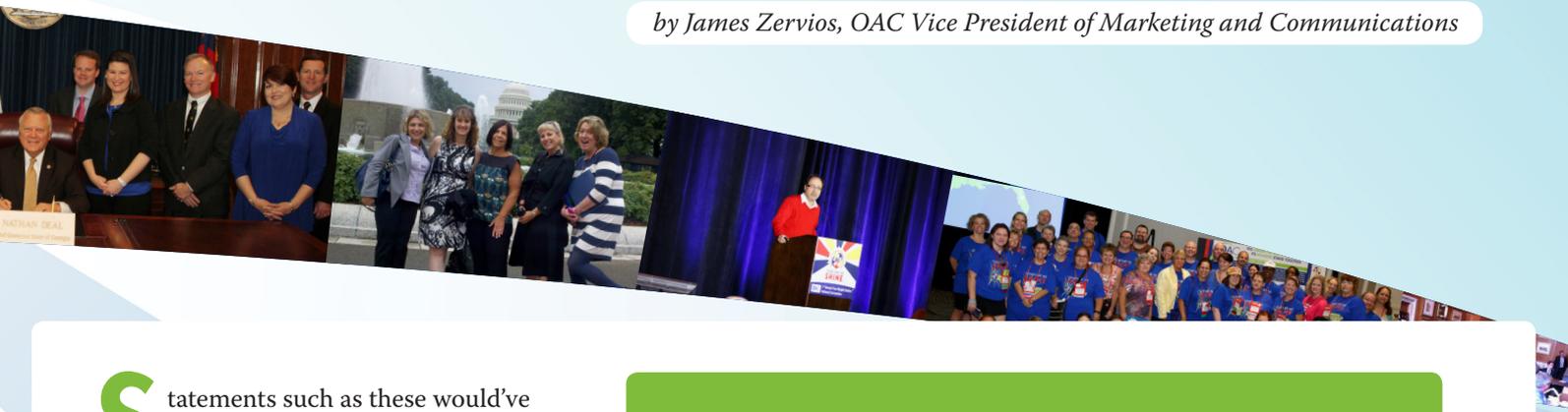
**“Well, maybe you should push away from the table and get a little more active.”**

**“Fat people are not allowed at buffet restaurants anymore!”**

**“You know what? You did it to yourself! Why should I pay for your weight?”**

# 10 YEARS with the OAC

*by James Zervios, OAC Vice President of Marketing and Communications*



Statements such as these would've been completely acceptable 10 years ago. In fact, these statements would've not only been accepted, but also not refuted in any way, shape or form. Today, that is absolutely not the case because you have 50,000 passionate individuals ready, willing and able to proudly stand with the Nation's leading organization representing individuals affected by the disease of obesity – the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC).

## How it All Began

Most individuals do not know the backstory to how the OAC was developed. In 2005, the OAC was founded when, at a meeting of legislators, one elected official stood up and said, "I can eliminate access to obesity surgery in my state today and not a single person would stop me." In that sentence, the reason for the OAC's existence was born. Shortly after that, healthcare professionals Robin Blackstone, MD; Georgeann Mallory, RD; and Christopher Still, DO, FACN, FACP, worked with industry representatives to lay the framework for what would become a first-of-its-kind non-profit organization whose sole focus would be to represent individuals impacted by the disease of obesity.

**"All of the professional societies for obesity were in existence, yet we realized that we were not hearing what is arguably the most important voice – the patient voice. Creating the framework for the OAC is something that I hold near and dear to my heart. To see this organization grow to what it is today is simply amazing,"**

**– Christopher Still, DO,  
FACN, FACP, OAC Board  
Member Emeritus**



Celebrate with the OAC continued from page 27

Starting with a small staff of three full-time employees in Tampa, Fla., and a handful of National Board Members, the OAC quickly dove headfirst into taking on important issues such as weight-based discriminatory policies by retail giant Walmart, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee's IQ testing requirements to access bariatric surgery and much more.



Founding staff members OAC President/CEO Joe Nadglowski (right), OAC Vice President of Programs and Operations Kristy Kuna (center) and OAC Vice President of Marketing and Communications James Zervios (left) in St. Louis for the 2007 AADE Annual Meeting.

"The early days for the OAC were interesting," said Joe Nadglowski, OAC President/CEO, "nobody could argue that individuals affected by this disease were often overlooked and ignored in day-to-day life, work, healthcare and more; however, we would often find a blatant disregard for individuals dealing with weight issues."

Within its first year, thousands of individuals joined the OAC. You could easily tell buzz was growing and that for the first time, an organization existed that would stand-up for obesity rights and advocate with a passionate voice for all those affected.

### OAC Growth and Success

Throughout the next 10 years, the OAC would become a staple in the healthcare community and general public. From visiting the White House to meet with the First Lady's staff on childhood obesity, to hosting the Inaugural *Your Weight Matters* National Convention, to distributing more than one million pieces of educational information, the OAC continued to see unparalleled success on many fronts.

"I don't know that anyone was prepared for the following that the OAC would generate at such an early stage in its life," said Pam Davis, RN, CBN, MBA, OAC Past-Chairman, "people from all throughout the United States, and even overseas, were interested in joining the Coalition and helping us spread the word about obesity."

## OAC Timeline

- 2005** OAC Office Opens – 1st Member Joins 
- 2006** 501(c)(3) Status Granted 
- 2007** OAC Wins BlueCross BlueShield Weight Bias IQ Testing Issue 
- 2008** One Million Educational Pieces Distributed 
- 2009** OAC Visits the White House to Meet with First Lady's Office 
- 2009** OAC Defeats PETA – PETA Removes Stigmatizing Billboard 
- 2010** OAC Testifies at the FDA 
- 2010** Your Weight Matters Campaign Launched, First Television PSA Commercial 
- 2011** 25,000 members, 25th issue of Your Weight Matters Magazine 
- 2012** Inaugural Your Weight Matters Convention 
- 2014** Convention Scholarship Program Launched 
- 2014** OAC Releases Spanish Versions of its Materials 
- 2015** 50,000 Members Join! 

For the first time in history, individuals affected by obesity had a voice. They had a voice shouting back at weight bias. They had a voice telling their healthcare provider that they needed more than an age-old advice of "eat less and move more." They had a voice advocating for new obesity treatments and access to evidence-based weight-loss options. Simply stated – for the first time, they had a VOICE!



*Celebrate with the OAC continued from previous page*

## The Future of the OAC – The Future of YOU!

Since its inception, the OAC has seen many successes on many fronts; however, none of these successes would have been achievable without the support of the most important component in the OAC – the membership. Standing with more than 50,000 members nationwide, the OAC has become a mighty force to be reckoned with, and this is why you matter.

“Serving as Chairman of the OAC has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life,” said Ted Kyle, RPh, MBA, OAC Chairman, “from attending *Your Weight Matters* Conventions to advocating on behalf of our membership on Capitol Hill, I cannot help but have a sense of dedication and responsibility to this organization.

Seeing where we’ve gone in 10 years excites me because I can only dream of where we will be in the next 10.”

As we look ahead to the next 10 years, it is you, as an OAC supporter, who will help us continue to fight for the rights and needs of all individuals affected by obesity. We, the OAC, are making a commitment to you that we will stand with you and help you along your journey toward improved health. In return, we ask that you make the commitment to stand with us.

For the remainder of 2015, the OAC will be asking all individuals throughout the United States to stand with us and sign the OAC’s pledge to commit yourself to the organization. For more information on how you can be a part of this one-of-a-kind opportunity, please see the below box.

**I STAND**  
with the  
**OAC**  
Obesity Action Coalition



In 2005, the OAC was formed when a legislator stood up at a meeting and called for the creation of an organization that would be the first of its kind: an organization representing individuals with obesity. For the past 10 years, the OAC has stood for YOU and for ALL individuals affected by this disease.

Whether it has been passionately advocating for access to obesity treatment and care; standing up to weight bias; supporting individuals who found themselves unrepresented and without a voice; or providing the RIGHT information through our evidence-based education, the OAC has stood strong as THE organization for individuals with obesity.

We pledge to continue to stand up for the more than 93 million Americans with obesity. Now, we need YOU to pledge to stand with us as we fight for a better world for those affected by this disease:

- A world free of weight bias
- A world where individuals are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their size or weight
- A world where those who are affected by obesity have the right to access safe and effective treatment options

Please pledge your support of our mission, and let us know that YOU STAND WITH THE OAC. This pledge will be symbolic in commemorating the OAC’s 10 Years, and will help us build our momentum to continue into the future.

Help the OAC build momentum for the future by signing our “I Stand with the OAC” pledge at:

[www.ObesityAction.org/10Years](http://www.ObesityAction.org/10Years)



# 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](http://OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN)**

[info@obesityaction.org](mailto:info@obesityaction.org)

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



@ObesityActionCoalition

@ObesityAction