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Obesity Action Coalition Supports Medical Spa Oversight January 29, 2026

Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by the disease of obesity. We support over 95,000 community members, including 915 living in Iowa. OAC advocates for access to safe, effective, evidence-based treatments for people affected by the disease of obesity. Medications used to manage a chronic disease must meet clear standards for safety, quality, transparency and oversight, regardless of where they are offered. OAC is pleased to support Iowa House Study Bill (HSB) 591, the Medical Spa Oversight Act. This legislation would establish state-based regulation of medical spas throughout Iowa.

Until coverage for obesity treatments is widely included in standard health benefits, OAC recognizes that compounded glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) is likely here to stay in some form, including in nontraditional settings. That reality makes strong safeguards even more critical. Obesity is a complex, chronic disease that requires long-term management. Any setting offering medications for obesity must be held to the same safety and quality expectations as traditional healthcare environments.

Med spas have increasingly entered the obesity treatment landscape, offering compounded products, including compounded GLP-1 medications. While this sector has grown rapidly, oversight has not always kept pace. Too often, the current environment can feel like the “Wild West,” with wide variation in medical supervision, transparency, quality controls and reporting requirements. This lack of consistency places people affected by obesity at risk and highlights the urgent need for clearer guardrails.

Specifically, HSB 591 (as introduced) would establish numerous guard rails surrounding med spas such as new licensing requirements, adverse event reporting, periodic inspections and enforcement protocols under the jurisdiction of the State Board of Medicine. In addition, this legislation outlines strict protocols governing the ingredients, storage and marketing of any compounded products distributed through a med spa.

OAC supports enhanced oversight of med spas that provide compounded GLP-1 medications. Strong oversight helps ensure that individuals seeking care understand what treatment they are receiving, that medications meet appropriate safety and quality standards, and that providers are accountable for patient outcomes. At a minimum, effective oversight of med spas offering compounded GLP-1 medications for obesity should include the following principles.



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Qualified medical oversight

Medications for a chronic disease should be prescribed and managed by appropriately trained, licensed healthcare professionals with the ability to evaluate medical history, monitor side effects and provide continuity of care.

Transparency

Patients should receive clear, accurate information about whether a medication is FDA-approved or compounded, how it was produced, what is known about its safety and effectiveness, and what uncertainties may exist.

Inspections and regulatory oversight

Facilities involved in compounding, dispensing or administering medications should be subject to regular, enforceable inspections and quality standards consistent with other healthcare settings. Med spas should not operate outside established regulatory expectations when providing medical treatment.

Reporting and accountability

Clear systems should be in place for reporting adverse events, quality concerns and safety issues, with defined responsibility for follow-up and corrective action. Robust reporting protects patients and supports continuous improvement.

Ingredient sourcing and traceability

Patients have the right to know where active ingredients come from and to trust that those ingredients meet established standards for purity and safety. Transparent sourcing is a basic component of patient protection.

OAC emphasizes that people affected by obesity should never be forced to choose between access and safety. The growth of med spas offering compounded GLP-1 medications reflects broader gaps in affordable FDA-approved obesity care, not poor judgment. Strong oversight can help protect patients while broader policy solutions work to improve access to evidence-based treatment.

OAC supports policies, like HSB 591 (as introduced), that strengthen oversight of med spas providing medications, establish consistent safety and transparency standards across care settings, protect patients from misleading or incomplete information, and expand access to affordable, FDA-approved obesity treatments. People affected by obesity deserve care that is safe, accountable and treated with the same seriousness as any other chronic disease. As med spas continue to play a role in the obesity care landscape, thoughtful oversight is essential to ensuring patient safety, trust and equity.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact OAC Policy Consultant Chris Gallagher at chris@potomaccurrents.com.