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April 26, 2019

Paul Telegdy, Co-Chairman, NBC Entertainment

CC:
George Cheeks, Co-Chairman, NBC Entertainment
Amber James, Vice President, NBC Entertainment Publicity

Dear Mr. Telegdy,

We are contacting you today on behalf of the more than 60,000 members of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), a national non-profit organization representing individuals affected by the disease of obesity. On the April 25, 2019 episode of the Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon, guest comedian Jay Leno delivered an "Angry Rant" monologue that severely stigmatized people affected by the disease of obesity. From joking about the causes and effects of obesity to living with the disease, Mr. Leno's statements are simply deplorable and unacceptable.

The OAC, and our members, find this episode and monologue to be very offensive on many levels. The statements made by Mr. Leno and featured on the Tonight Show greatly contribute to the stigmatization of people with obesity. Obesity is a serious, complex disease affecting more than 93 million Americans nationwide. The disease is driven by genetics, metabolic adaptations, psychosocial factors, environmental factors and more. It also is associated with a myriad of other conditions, such as type 2 diabetes and hypertension. Along with these serious medical conditions, people living with obesity carry the burden of being constant targets of ridicule and discrimination in today's society. This weight bias can have a very harmful impact on individuals affected by obesity. Psychological effects include depression, anxiety and poor body image. From a social and physical aspect, weight bias can lead to social rejection by peers, unhealthy weight control practices and more.

At this time, the OAC formally requests an on-air apology from Mr. Leno and Mr. Fallon for perpetuating such stigmatizing and hateful comments about obesity and those affected by it. The OAC also requests that NBC remove the episode and any pre-roll footage featuring Mr. Leno's monologue from NBC's website and any NBC-controlled YouTube channels. In addition, we request that NBC feature obesity as part of "The More You Know" PSA series and work with the OAC on developing this valuable content. We thank you for your time and look forward to your response and immediate attention to this serious issue.

Sincerely,

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

Joseph Nadglowski
OAC President and CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Vicari".

Michelle Vicari
OAC Chairwoman of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia M. Nece".

Patricia Nece, JD,
Chair, OAC Weight Bias Taskforce