



**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

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**\*\*\*Media Contact\*\*\***

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**35 Groups Urge Senate Chronic Care Working Group to Tackle U.S. Obesity Epidemic**

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, 34 organizations joined the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund (CEOAF) in urging the newly formed Senate Finance Committee Chronic Care working group to include obesity policy action recommendations as part of their effort to develop legislative approaches to address Medicare spending on chronic diseases. Among those who joined CEOAF were some of the leading voices in public health, industry and patient voices, including the American Heart Association, Healthcare Leadership Council, NAACP, and the YMCA of the USA.

As the submission from these interests noted, more than one in three U.S. adults and nearly one in five children have obesity. In the Medicare population, the problem is more pronounced; more than 40 percent of Medicare beneficiaries—or 20 million Americans—currently struggle with obesity, and millions more are expected to have obesity absent policy changes. The cost implications of this are striking; annual medical costs for a Medicare beneficiary with obesity are, on average, \$1,964 more in 2012 dollars than they are for a healthy weight beneficiary. Accordingly, Medicare spending attributable to obesity and obesity-related conditions is more than \$50 billion each year.

As the groups urge, “Treating and preventing obesity is essential to preventing the onset of other, costly medical conditions... we are hopeful that the Chronic Care Working Group will... include bipartisan solutions in their recommendations to the Chairman and Ranking Member.” The Working Group is expected to deliver its final recommendations later this year.

Mark Schoeberl, Chairman of the CEOAF’s Board of Directors, said “Obesity is perhaps the single largest and most costly driver of chronic disease in America. With nearly 93 percent of all Medicare dollars spent caring for chronic diseases, policymakers can truly move the federal budget needle and reduce the prevalence of chronic disease by prioritizing policy measures that can stem the current obesity epidemic and begin to reverse U.S. obesity rates.”

For more information, please visit the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund’s website at [www.obesityactionfund.org](http://www.obesityactionfund.org).

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**About the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund**

By bringing together leaders from across industry, academia, and public health with policymakers and their advisors, the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund advocates for needed policy changes to reverse the nation’s costliest disease.