

Obesity and Health Reform

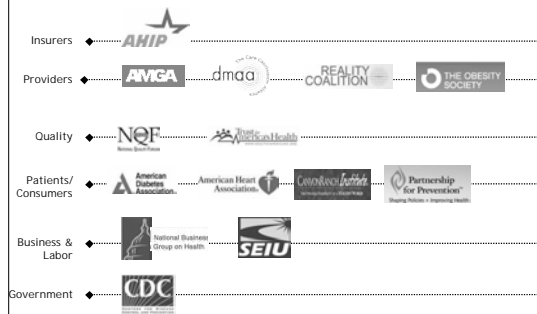
CDC Weight of the Nation Conference
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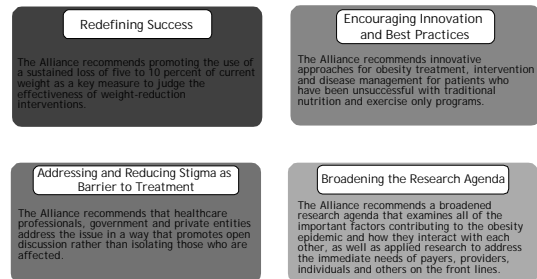
The STOP Obesity Alliance: A Unique Coalition Aligned for Change



Aligning the Stakeholders That Matter: Steering Committee Members



Alliance Policy Recommendations: Overcoming Public and Private Sector, Medical Barriers



Obesity GPS: Public and Private Sector Decision Making Tool

Obesity GPS - A Guide for Policy and Program Solutions



»First navigation tool to guide development of policies and programs geared to reducing the overweight and obesity epidemic

»Online version is available at www.stopobesityalliance.org

Obesity GPS – A Guide for Policy and Program Solutions

How GPS Works


The question matrix can guide private and public sector decisions for changes we are making as a nation – in our homes, businesses, communities and states. Match your proposal with the following guide depending on your focus: a specific health intervention, policies aimed at health providers, or research initiatives.

The Obesity GPS is divided into four categories, each of which includes questions to consider when examining your policy or program. The categories are:

- ✦ Legislative and private sector initiatives: Defining success
- ✦ Legislative and private sector initiatives: Encouraging innovation and multifactorial interventions
- ✦ Initiatives aimed at clinicians: Creating positive attitudes and approaches
- ✦ Research initiatives: Focusing and coordinating research efforts

The result? A way to determine whether *your* policy will help America achieve a healthier and more productive population overall.





How will this policy or program define success for participating individuals, populations, or organizations?

For legislative or private-sector health initiatives

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How will this policy or program define success for participating individuals, populations, or organizations?	
Consider	<i>Does it define success by evaluating the effect it has on the health and/or productivity of communities or populations?</i>
Why	Any intervention that plans to reduce the overall cost of obesity, whether financial or human, must address the issue on a population level. Success in larger terms, such as increased worker productivity or overall reduced medical costs, should be measured at the larger community or population level to give an accurate picture of the success or failure of an intervention for society. The policy or program should define success using measures meaningful to the target population. For example, national and state public health strategies may define success as slowing down or stopping the rise in obesity; workforce interventions may define success as employees maintaining weight or increasing physical activity; and clinical interventions may define success as a patient maintaining five to 10 percent weight loss or reaching a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI).
Consider	<i>Does it define success based on real health outcomes and sustained weight loss?</i>
Why	Currently, success in sustained weight loss is evaluated based upon different definitions of success by patients, health care professionals, and researchers. For example, a growing body of evidence suggests that losing between five and 10 percent of current weight is a good measure of success, since such sustained weight loss leads to major improvements in key health screens, including diabetes, lipid blood levels, and even mortality. ¹ While attainment of a normal BMI for an individual maximizes health benefits, substantial improvement can result from incremental improvements that may be easier to achieve and sustain.
Consider	<i>Does it define success by addressing many aspects of health?</i>
Why	Most individuals who are overweight or obese and many of their health care professionals have unrealistic weight-loss goals that are focused on cosmetic changes, rather than long-term health. ² These goals may be to achieve a societal norm that is mostly cosmetic or to reach a normal BMI in a short period of time. Promoting sustained health improvements over cosmetic results would help focus the dialogue on obesity toward healthy mental and physical outcomes for individuals.



How will this policy or program encourage innovation and multifactorial interventions in obesity prevention and treatment?

For legislative or private-sector health initiatives

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How will this policy or program encourage innovation and multifactorial interventions in obesity prevention and treatment?	
Consider	<i>Does it promote ways to reduce weight-related health risks, like diabetes and cardiovascular disease, through multifactorial interventions?</i>
Why	A growing body of evidence, including research by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health, suggests that losing between five to 10 percent of current weight leads to major health improvements in diabetes, lipid blood levels, and even mortality. ³ Policies or programs should encourage multifactorial interventions that can achieve sustained weight loss and decrease health risks associated with obesity, since programs utilizing a single modality, such as diet alone, or physical activity alone, have not been as efficacious. A baseline recommendation of proper nutrition and increased physical activity is essential in obesity prevention and treatment; other therapies, including surgery, behavioral treatment, drug interventions, and other innovative approaches should be appropriately assessed.
Consider	<i>Does it provide positive incentives for health care professionals, employers, and/or individuals to engage in evidence-based weight management programs?</i>
Why	In a recent national poll, 91 percent of employers believed that they could reduce their health care costs by influencing employees to adopt healthier lifestyles. ⁴ Incentives for employers or employees that adopt, promote, and participate in these programs can have a strong effect on employees' health and employers' benefits cost.
Consider	<i>Does it offer a comprehensive approach addressing many aspects of health including mental and physical well being?</i>
Why	According to the American Heart Association, to prevent the development of overweight and obesity throughout life, population-based strategies that improve social and physical environmental contexts for healthful eating and physical activity are essential. Policies or programs should include educational and motivational messages aimed at the entire population, as well as societal, worksite, government, public health, and health care organizations promoting health consciousness, providing opportunities for physical activity, and making healthy foods accessible. ⁵

How will this policy or program encourage innovation and multifactorial interventions in obesity prevention and treatment?	
Consider	<i>Does it involve multiple sectors in non-traditional partnerships?</i>
Why	Community organization and local government involvement has proven to be immensely successful for motivating individuals and entire communities to get involved in achieving healthy weight. Evidence-based studies show proven community-based disease prevention programs can lead to improvements in physical activity and nutrition. ⁶ Coordination and collaboration between the community (local governments, public health agencies, employers, health plans) and clinical settings (primary care, specialists, hospitals) is essential to create successful interventions.
Consider	<i>Does it include provisions that address health disparities?</i>
Why	Research shows connections between socioeconomic status, educational attainment, access to health care, race, ethnicity, and gender, among others, that must be taken into account when designing programs to address overweight and obesity. ⁷ Policies and programs must be culturally and linguistically appropriate for the target population.
Consider	<i>Does it dispel misinformation and provide factual messages about the causes of overweight and obesity through various communications channels?</i>
Why	Generating awareness helps to create an open dialogue regarding obesity, emphasize positive messages, reduce stigma, and address misinformation. Messages that direct patients and health care professionals to evidence-based sources will create a more clear and effective dialogue around obesity.



How will this policy or program reduce stigma and create positive attitudes and approaches when treating or discussing obesity?

For legislative proposals or private-sector initiatives aimed at clinicians

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How will this policy or program reduce stigma and create positive attitudes and approaches when treating or discussing obesity?	
Consider	<i>Does it encourage realistic expectations for successful health outcomes by encouraging five to 10 percent sustained weight loss as an appropriate benchmark and judge interventions accordingly?</i>
Why	Most overweight or obese individuals and their health care clinicians have unrealistic weight-loss expectations, often linked to a societal norm, and driven by cosmetic concerns. ¹ Promoting the health improvements that result from a five to 10 percent sustained weight loss as an incremental step toward reaching a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI) could help focus the dialogue on obesity toward healthy outcomes.
Consider	<i>Does it allocate clinicians the tools and time necessary to have a productive conversation with patients?</i>
Why	Research studies on primary care physician practice patterns have shown professionals often do not discuss obesity, due to a number of factors including lack of time, lack of knowledge of treatment modalities, lack of confidence in success, and potential discomfort with broaching the topic with patients. ²
Consider	<i>Does it help clinicians communicate more effectively what an appropriate success level is for an individual?</i>
Why	Coupling realistic expectations with a positive environment allows for open, productive discussions about weight loss and increased understanding of the environmental and individual causes of obesity. ²

How will this policy or program reduce stigma and create positive attitudes and approaches when treating or discussing obesity?	
Consider	<i>Does it encourage training of health care clinicians in effective evidence-based interventions?</i>
Why	Though large gaps exist in the evidence base, the available research can still guide clinicians in how they interact with their obese patients. As the evidence base broadens, it will become increasingly important to educate professionals on emerging information. ¹
Consider	<i>Does it help address obesity in a primary care setting?</i>
Why	Since primary care physicians see many overweight or obese patients, whether for weight management or not, it is important that they provide effective screening, counseling, and treatment to people across the weight spectrum. ²

How will this policy or program focus and coordinate obesity research efforts?

For legislative proposals or private-sector research initiatives



How will this policy or program focus and coordinate obesity research efforts?	
Consider	<i>Does it help to create an evidence base that payers, professionals, health care professionals, and researchers can use to assess the value of an intervention?</i>
Why	The research agenda should examine both the multiple factors that lead to obesity and obesity's significant impact on society when designing research related to clinical practice, the health care delivery system, benefit design, environmental factors, social and economic costs, and other broad issues that may affect the epidemic.
Consider	<i>Is there an evaluation component that captures what program participants learned?</i>
Why	Evaluation is critical to understanding which interventions work over the long term and why. Evaluations must be rigorous, focused on measures that are methodologically sound and meaningful to patients and society. The presentation and publication of these results including in peer-reviewed journals will attest to the quality of this work and assist the development of additional programs in other settings.
Consider	<i>Does it call for additional assessment on interventions related to overweight and obesity?</i>
Why	Assessment is necessary to all private and public-sector employers planning interventions for their employees' health and must be a piece of evaluating interventions. Developing, testing, and evaluating interventions that include multiple components is essential among diverse populations before co-morbidities develop. In addition to a baseline recommendation of healthful eating and increased physical activity, strategies such as use of health risk assessments, intensive counseling and behavioral interventions, drug therapies, health coaching, surgery, and other approaches, should be examined and evaluated for efficacy. This effort may lead to further improving screening and assessment tools that can help match a patient's characteristics and needs with appropriate interventions.