

Dear Chair and Members of the House Health Committee,

I recognize the hearing on HB813 may already be underway, and I apologize for the timing of this message. I had planned to provide oral testimony but was unable to attend in person due to clinical responsibilities and prior commitments. I appreciate the opportunity to submit written testimony for the record in strong support of HB813.

I am a physician boarded in obesity medicine and a public health researcher focused on cardiometabolic health and diabetes prevention. I do not have a single patient story to share—I have countless experiences caring for patients whose health is shaped by lack of access to effective obesity treatment. From a public health perspective, I see the totality of what is underway: inequitable access to evidence-based care that contributes to preventable progression of diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease, particularly among individuals insured by Medicaid.

My work also focuses on pregnancy and postpartum health, where obesity increases the risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes and long-term cardiometabolic disease for mothers. Maternal obesity is also associated with higher lifetime risk of obesity and metabolic disease for children, perpetuating intergenerational cycles of poor health. Coverage decisions made today have implications not only for current patients, but for the long-term health of families and communities.

Obesity is a chronic disease, and FDA-approved anti-obesity medications, including GLP-1 receptor agonists, are evidence-based treatments. Excluding coverage for these therapies exacerbates existing inequities and limits access to prevention for those who are already most vulnerable.

For these reasons, I strongly support HB813 and urge the Committee to advance this legislation to expand equitable access to effective obesity treatment under Medicaid. Aligning coverage with the evidence base will improve population health and reduce downstream healthcare costs.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to advancing health equity in our state.

Sincerely,

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