

March 11, 2026

Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
House Health Committee  
Maryland House of Delegates

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison and Honorable Members of the Committee,

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, representing more than 1,900 registered dietitians in Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of House Bill 1565**.

HB 1565 represents an important step forward in addressing the growing burden of obesity and related chronic conditions by ensuring that individuals have access to comprehensive, evidence-based treatment options. Obesity contributes to numerous conditions, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and certain cancers and effective treatment requires sustained, coordinated care that supports long-term behavior change.

The bill appropriately recognizes the importance of evidence-based, intensive, multicomponent behavioral and lifestyle interventions to support healthy weight management. Research demonstrates that structured lifestyle interventions can significantly improve weight-related outcomes and reduce the risk of complications associated with obesity and diabetes.<sup>1,2</sup>

As the Committee considers HB 1565, we respectfully suggest a minor clarification to further strengthen the bill and ensure alignment with established clinical services. Specifically, in section 2, 15-839.1 which describes programs that promote evidence-based, intensive, multicomponent behavioral and lifestyle modification interventions, we recommend clarifying that such interventions may include Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) and Intensive Behavioral Therapy (IBT) delivered by qualified health professionals.

Clarifying that these services are included within the referenced evidence-based interventions would help ensure that patients have access to the full range of clinically appropriate care, aligning with the intent of the bill.

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan-Bathke M, Baxter SD, Halliday TM, Lynch A, Malik N, Raynor HA, Garay JL, Rozga M. Weight Management Interventions Provided by a Dietitian for Adults with Overweight or Obesity: An Evidence Analysis Center Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2023 Nov;123(11):1621-1661.e25. doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2022.03.014.

<sup>2</sup> US Preventive Services Task Force. Behavioral Weight Loss Interventions to Prevent Obesity-Related Morbidity and Mortality in Adults: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*. 2018;320(11):1163-1171. doi:10.1001/jama.2018.13022

We appreciate the Committee's leadership in advancing policies that support prevention, chronic disease management, and improved health outcomes for Maryland residents. We respectfully request that the committee report favorably on the bill.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to improving access to evidence-based obesity care.

Sincerely,

*Kim Iles, MS, RDN*

Kim Iles, MS, RDN  
Senior Manager, Nutrition Services Coverage  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics