

HB1565_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
03/13/2026
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TESTIMONY ON HB#1565 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Health - Obesity Management and Treatment Programs (Healthy Maryland for Every Body)

TO: Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and members of the Health Committee
FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#1565, Public Health - Obesity Management and Treatment Programs (Healthy Maryland for Every Body)

Approximately 33%–34% of Maryland adults have obesity. The state's adult obesity rate is ranked around 18th to 32nd in the U.S. and is projected to increase to 50% by 2030. Rates vary by demographic, with higher prevalence among Non-Hispanic Black (42.5%) and Hispanic (35.7%) adults.

Key Data on Maryland Obesity Rates - Total Population: Roughly 1.6 to 2.1 million adults in Maryland are affected by obesity.

Obesity in Maryland is driven by social and physical environments, genetics, physical inactivity, and poor diet. Individuals with lower education levels and lower household incomes are disproportionately affected.¹

Recognizing the extent of the problem of obesity in Maryland and the effects it has on our healthcare systems and individuals who are obese this bill attempts to resolve those problems.

The purpose of this bill is to require the Secretary of Budget and Management to include a certain obesity management and treatment program in the State Employee and Retiree Health and Welfare Benefits Program; establish requirements for the obesity management and treatment program; and require certain insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to provide coverage for an obesity management and treatment program for certain individuals who have been diagnosed with obesity, diabetes, or other obesity-related conditions.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB1565.

¹ Google AI Search "rates of obesity in Maryland"