

Help Prevent Diabetes. **Treat Obesity.**

Diabetes and obesity remain significant health issues in the United States. Today, 42% of adults are living with obesity.¹ What's true nationwide is especially pronounced in Maryland. Treating the chronic disease of obesity can help prevent or delay the development of type 2 diabetes and may even lead to remission.

Maryland Obesity Epidemic

- Approximately 33% of the MD adult population are living with obesity.²
- 32% of MD adults ages 60 and older are living with obesity.²
- The obesity rate for MD adults ages 25 and older is projected to reach 61% for females and 55% for males by 2050.³

Obesity in the U.S.

- Roughly 42% (110 million) adults are affected by obesity.¹
- Nearly 15 million children and adolescents are affected by obesity.⁴
- Almost 500,000 annual deaths are attributable to excess weight.⁵
- Nationwide, one in three young adults between the ages of 17 and 24 cannot qualify for military service due to overweight status.⁶

The Costly Consequences of Obesity

- Obesity costs the state economy an estimated \$11.2 billion annually.⁷
- Obesity-related medical costs in the United States are estimated to be nearly \$173 billion annually.¹
- On average, out-of-pocket costs have increased 37% over the last decade for people with large employer coverage with an obesity diagnosis.⁸

Advocating for Evidence-Based, Person-Centered Treatment for Obesity

The *Standards of Care in Overweight and Obesity—2026* developed by the Obesity Association™, a division of the American Diabetes Association®, recommends a person-centered, evidence-based approach to treating obesity. Obesity is a complex, chronic, recurring disease that substantially increases the risk for type 2 diabetes and its complications. Research shows that the treatment of obesity can prevent the progression of prediabetes to type 2 diabetes and improve health in people living with diabetes. To address obesity effectively, a comprehensive approach is needed, including:⁹

- **Screening and prevention as part of routine clinical care:** Evaluate key clinical indicators such as height, weight, waist circumference, and BMI, and document them as a standard part of preventative care, enabling clinicians to make a diagnosis of obesity and further assess obesity-related diseases and complications.
- **Intensive behavioral therapy:** Offer intensive lifestyle modification interventions delivered by trained professionals using respectful, person-centered nutrition, physical activity, and behavioral support to help individuals make long-lasting changes that promote their health.
- **Obesity medications:** Provide access to Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved obesity medications to people living with obesity with personalized treatment and dose options based on shared decision-making, and with wraparound care. Medication decisions should take into account their proven weight-related and cardiometabolic health benefits.
- **Metabolic bariatric surgery:** Ensure individuals living with obesity have access to metabolic bariatric surgery based on recommendations from experienced health care professionals.

Sources:

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