

35th National Black Nurses Day on Capitol Hill Health Equity, Reckoning & Wellness: NBNA's Renewed Call to Action

Obesity: America's Health Calamity

The National Black Nurses Association supports comprehensive efforts to reduce obesity and its devastating effects on morbidity and mortality in minorities. The high mortality and morbidity rates of obesity and its related conditions among Black Americans are staggering. NBNA calls on the 118th Congress to address Obesity as America's health calamity. Obesity disproportionately impacts the Black community compared to other communities, which is unacceptable.

Background

- An estimated 300,000 deaths per year are due to the obesity epidemic.
- The estimated annual medical costs for adults living with obesity neared **\$173 billion** in 2019, \$1,861 higher than medical costs for people with a healthy weight.
- From 1999 – 2020, obesity prevalence increased from 31% to 42%, and severe obesity increased from 5% to 9%.
 - Obesity is classified by body mass index (BMI, kg/m²) is ≥ 30 kg/m², and severely obese ≥ 40 kg/m².
- In children, a BMI \geq 95th percentile of the CDC sex-specific chart denotes obesity levels.
- Among children, in 2020, obesity prevalence was almost 20%.
- Obesity is a risk factor for more than ten chronic diseases and many forms of cancer.
- Obesity is a significant risk factor contributing to worsening COVID-19 -related prognosis.
- In 2020, Black Americans had the highest (50%) overall obesity rate, with 57% among black women and girls 29%.
- Obesity projections for 2030 estimate severe obesity (BMI >40) will be highest among Black adults.

Recommendations to Legislators

NBNA calls upon the 118th Congress to:

- Support legislation that will fully implement the **5-pillar priorities** identified in the 2022 White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, & Health Strategic Plan.
 - Improving food access and affordability
 - Integrating nutrition and health
 - Empowering all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices
 - Supporting physical activity for all
 - Enhancing nutrition and food security research
- Support the passage of **S.596, H.R. 1577 - Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2022**
 - This bill will ensure access to the full continuum of obesity care
- Support passage of the **Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act**, (Public Law 111–296), last reauthorized in 2015.
 - This bill would authorize and improve all the federal school meal and child nutrition programs

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