Obesity is a serious, chronic disease that affects nearly half of adults in the United States. In fact, in 2013 the American Medical Association officially recognized obesity as a disease. It is generally defined as a body mass index, or BMI, of 30 or higher.

Obesity can increase the risk of:
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Certain cancers
- High blood pressure
- Musculoskeletal disorders

Obesity can result from inherited, physiological and environmental factors, combined with diet and exercise.  

The Impact of Obesity
On top of affecting patients' physical health, obesity can:
- Increase discrimination
- Reduce quality of life
- Raise overall health care costs
- Increase risk of depression and mental health challenges
- Contribute to earlier death
In the United States, obesity is the second-leading cause of death in adults under 70.

Despite its prevalence, it can be addressed and treated.

**How is Obesity Treated?**
Each patient is different and requires a personalized approach to treatment.

- FDA-approved obesity medicine
- Bariatric surgery
- Exercise
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Dietary changes

Although a number of FDA-approved medications are available to treat obesity, limited health plan coverage can hinder patient access.

**Obesity is a serious disease.**
The health care system must ensure that patients can access the treatment they need.

Sources:
1. Mayo Clinic
2. Harvard School of Public Health