



Obesity in Older Populations

Obesity is a chronic disease affecting nearly 39% of adults aged 60 and older.¹

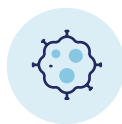
As the population ages, addressing obesity is increasingly important for improving health outcomes, preserving independence and reducing health care costs. Obesity is influenced by genetic, biological, environmental and social factors — not simply lifestyle choices. Like other chronic diseases, obesity requires patient-centered care.

Obesity Increases Risk of Chronic Conditions

Obesity increases the likelihood of developing several serious conditions that become more common with age including but not limited to:



Alzheimer's disease and cognitive decline



Cancers



Osteoarthritis

In older adults, obesity often occurs alongside age-related muscle loss. This combination can reduce mobility, increase fall risk, contribute to frailty and complicate disease management. Without appropriate treatment, obesity can accelerate functional decline and limit independent living.

Obesity Remains Undertreated

Despite its prevalence and impact, obesity remains undertreated in older populations. Many patients face barriers to comprehensive care, including limited access to behavioral counseling, nutrition support and medications. As a result, they are often left without the full range of clinically appropriate treatment options. Obesity treatment plans should be tailored to each patient's needs and goals.

Despite its prevalence and impact, **obesity remains undertreated in older populations.**

Current Policy Gaps

Current Medicare policy creates significant barriers to obesity treatment. Although Medicare covers certain behavioral interventions, it generally excludes medications prescribed specifically for chronic weight management under Part D. To help address this gap, the Medicare GLP-1 Bridge program was created to allow coverage of obesity management medications outside the traditional Part D pharmacy benefit until December 2027. While the program is an important step forward, obesity medications are still not a standard Medicare Part D benefit. Expanding access to comprehensive obesity care remains critical, as untreated obesity contributes to higher rates of chronic disease and increased strain on public health resources.

Expanding access to comprehensive obesity care remains **critical**.

Resources:

1. [Obesity in the elderly: Prevalence, effects, and management](#)

Closing the Coverage Gap

Expanding access to evidence-based treatments, behavioral interventions and community-based support can help older Americans better manage obesity and related health conditions. Obesity is a chronic disease and recognizing it as such, while modifying coverage policies, can improve health outcomes, preserve independence and reduce long-term health care costs.



**Alliance for
Patient Access**

The Alliance for Patient Access is a national network of policy-minded health care providers advocating for patient-centered care.

AllianceforPatientAccess.org

