

## About The Obesity Society

The Obesity Society is a nonprofit, 501(c) (3) professional society dedicated to expanding research, prevention, treatment on obesity and reduction in stigma and discrimination affecting persons with obesity. The society was founded in 1982 and is incorporated in the state of Maryland.

The principal activities of the society include:

- ★ **The Obesity Society Annual Scientific Meeting** is the most comprehensive, multi-disciplinary meeting on obesity in the United States. The meeting includes more than 900 abstracts accepted for oral or poster presentation and key lectures, symposia and presentations from over 100 world-renowned speakers and scientists from a variety of disciplines. The meeting follows a track-based format, including: Cell and Molecular Biology, Integrative Biology, Clinical Studies, Population Studies and Clinical/Professional Practice. Special sessions address developments ranging from advocacy efforts to childhood obesity prevention. Participants may also take advantage of various special-interest section activities and networking opportunities in Clinical Management, Bariatric Surgery, Pediatrics, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Epidemiology, Health Services Research, Latin American Affairs, Diversity Promotion and Obesity & Cancer. Corporations also offer sponsored symposia at the meeting and joint symposia are developed through an arrangement with other sister societies.

Attendance has averaged over 2,000 participants for the last several years. Approximately 50% are PhDs, 32% MDs, 14% RDs. Physician specialties include endocrinology (14%), internal medicine (10%), psychology/psychiatry (9%), pediatrics (8%), bariatric surgery (7%), family practice (4%). Some 22% of attendees work in universities, 19% in hospitals, 15% in individual or group practice, 12% in medical school and 6% in government. Obesity 2009, to be held in Washington, DC from October 24-28, 2009, will feature more than 50 exhibitors with products from the following categories: nonprofit and educational groups, pharmaceutical companies, medical device companies and laboratory research product manufacturers.

The 2010 Annual Scientific Meeting, Obesity 2010, will be held in San Diego, CA and the 2011 Meeting in Orlando, FL.

- ★ **Obesity**, is the official journal of The Obesity Society. Available in print and online, *Obesity* is dedicated to increasing knowledge, fostering research, and promoting better treatment for people with obesity and their loved ones. *Obesity* publishes important peer-reviewed research and cutting-edge reviews, commentaries, public health and medical developments. The journal is published and marketed by Nature Publishing Group. Editorial is managed through our in-house team under the Managing Editor and the guidance of the Editor-in-Chief and the Publications Board. The journal is one of the added benefits of membership to the Society.

- ★ **Educational Activities** include a combination of in-person and online CME activities.

In-person activities include the society's annual scientific meeting, while other meetings include those offered by a subgroup of The Obesity Society, the Centers for Obesity Research and Education (CORE). The annual CORE meeting's mission is to educate clinicians in weight management. CORE's meetings are held annually at a regional location within the United States and additionally have become a pre-conference event to The Obesity Society's Annual Meeting.

Online education offerings include the Live Learning Center (LLC), where recorded sessions from prior annual meetings are available for viewing. The format of these sessions includes recorded audio from the original live session at the annual meeting that is synchronized with the PowerPoint slides. These are available to prior annual meeting attendees as well as non-attendees. The Live Learning Center will also include access to the Obesity 2009 abstracts shortly after the meeting concludes. Another new feature of the LLC that will debut shortly after the 2009 annual meeting will be access to educational slide decks focusing on current topics in obesity research. These will be available free to society members and for a nominal subscription fee to non-members.

- ★ **Advocacy** is a growing component of the Society's activities. In 2008, the society held forums at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. In Denver, at the Democratic Forum, invited guests and an expert panel, including, Morgan Downey, James Hill, Robert Eckel and Caroline Apovian, along with moderator Sally Squires, addressed how a Democratic administration would address the issue of obesity and the historic inclusion of obesity in the Democratic platform. The forum featured the director of policy for the Obama Campaign and the author of the Democratic Platform. In Minneapolis/St. Paul, with Lesley Stahl as moderator, and invited guests, including, former Presidential candidates, Governors Tommy Thompson and Mike Huckabee, and New Hampshire State Senator Bob Clegg, and obesity experts, including Obesity Society past presidents Michael Jensen and Charlie Billington, and Allen Levine, Caroline Apovian and Eric Finkelstein, the Forum discussed the strategies that Republicans have advocated at the state and national levels to combat the crisis of obesity.

Notable statements from the society in 2009 included a position statement released in August 2009 on the recent criticism of Regina Benjamin, MD, President Obama's nominee for Surgeon General. Critics suggested that because Dr. Benjamin is overweight, this sends the wrong message from the person who will be the public face of America's health initiatives. The Obesity Society's statement reinforced its commitment to increasing public awareness about weight bias and the negative consequences it can have for those affected.

The Obesity Society also strongly opposed a 2009 billboard campaign from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) promoting vegetarianism at the expense of stigmatizing overweight and obese persons. Also, in August 2009, the society authored an article that was published in the Washington Times indicating solutions to eradicate the obesity epidemic. The article highlighted the need to change the public perception and understanding of obesity, promote education on the complex causes and consequences of obesity, increase access to professional treatment, and change national policies.

- ★ **Grants for New Investigators** is a relatively new program for the society that has been continued in 2009. The society has been able to raise funds from the private sector to support 2 grants for new investigators this year and 8 in the previous year. Over 100 applications were received for this year's competition. Travel grants were given to another 15 abstract submitters on a competitive basis.
- ★ **Membership** in the society is approximately 2,500. In general, the membership has the same characteristics as the annual meeting attendance.
- ★ **Partnerships** are an important way in which the society broadens its reach. The society works on a regular basis with:

- The American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery;
- The American Dietetic Association and its Weight Management Practice Group;
- The International Association for the Study of Obesity;
- The American Diabetes Association and its Shaping America's Health- the Association for Weight Management and Obesity Prevention;
- Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance of the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Sciences;
- The Obesity Action Coalition, which focuses on correcting public misunderstanding about obesity; and

The Obesity Society is a steering committee member of the Strategies to Overcome and Prevent Obesity (STOP) Obesity Alliance. In September of 2009, The Obesity Society and other steering committee members, along with two former US Surgeons General, worked to develop effective recommendations to urge policymakers to include obesity as the largest and most urgent driving factor in healthcare reform.

The Obesity Society has partnered with 12 other professional societies to develop an Obesity Medicine Physician Certification (OMPC) Examination. The 18-month process of establishing an examination was initiated by The Obesity Society in 2008 with an expected completion in March 2010. The evaluation of the body of knowledge required by physicians of obesity medicine was completed by the Practice Analysis Task Force with the help of two focus group panels and 25 subject-matter experts in nutrition. The steering committee is now beginning phase II of the process – writing questions for the examination.

In July of 2009 The Obesity Society entered into two strategic partnerships. The first, with “The Art of Living with Marilu Henner,” hopes to expand education on obesity by providing viewers across the country with expert-driven information about obesity, prevention and treatment, and improving the quality of life of those who are affected. The second partnership is with Healthy Interactions®, a global leader in health education. The collaboration will develop educational materials using Healthy Interactions proprietary *Conversation Map*® educational tools to better support the medical treatment of obesity.

In addition, the Society has regular interactions with the National Institutes of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States Government.

- ★ **Media** is an important channel for the society’s communication. Requests from the media (as well as from members of the public) come into the society’s office every day. The Public Affairs Committee works to identify expert spokespeople within the society that can speak to the media on a wide variety of topics. It is a rare day that a media story about obesity does not include a member of The Obesity Society.
- ★ **Corporate Support** is an important means for the society to implement its goals. Current supporters include Abbott, Allergan, Amylin, Covidien, Eli Lilly & Co., Ethicon Endo-Surgery, GI Dynamics, GlaxoSmithKline, Jenny Craig, Merck & Co., Novo Nordisk, NutriSystem, Orexigen Therapeutics, Pfizer, sanofi-aventis and VIVUS.
- ★ **New Programs** are under development at the society. Due to a generous grant from one of our corporate sponsors, the society will be developing educational programming on childhood obesity for the nation’s Community Health Centers, which serve many poor and disadvantaged citizens. Also, a task force of the Society is developing a program to certify physicians (and possibly non-physician health care providers) in counseling for obesity.

- ★ **Volunteers** are the heart and soul of The Obesity Society. Over 100 members serve on the society's committees and boards; at least 100 more serve as reviewers of papers and abstracts. Not only do they bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding about obesity to the society and its programs, but they also have a great deal of experience with other professional societies, governments at the federal, state and local level, industry and the media.

For further information, see our website, [www.obesity.org](http://www.obesity.org) or call (301) 563-6526 or fax us at (301) 563-6595