

CONSENSUS STATEMENT:

Supporting Inclusive Workplaces for People Living with Obesity



Obesity is a complex, chronic disease shaped by genetic, biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors. Unfortunately, many workplaces still perpetuate negative attitudes, biases, and exclusionary practices towards individuals living with obesity.

Employers have an important role to play in fostering dignity, safety, and opportunity for employees living with obesity. To that end, we support coordinated action across five priority areas:

1. RECOGNIZE OBESITY AS A COMPLEX, CHRONIC DISEASE

Obesity is not a lifestyle choice or personal failing. We encourage efforts to educate employers and employees about the chronic, relapsing nature of obesity, and to align internal communication and health messaging with current scientific understanding.

2. ELIMINATE WEIGHT BIAS AND STIGMA IN THE WORKPLACE

We acknowledge that weight bias and stigma can be harmful and are pervasive in organizational culture, policies, and practice. We support strategies that help employers identify and address weight-based discrimination, promote people-first language, and deliver anti-stigma training to all staff and leadership.

3. ENSURE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENTS ARE ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE FOR ALL BODIES

We recognize that physical and psychological safety are prerequisites for workplace equity. We support workplace design and policies that ensure facilities, equipment, and practices accommodate people of all sizes and promote psychological safety and inclusion.

4. ADVANCE EQUITY IN LEADERSHIP, DEVELOPMENT, AND OPPORTUNITY

We recognize that people living with obesity often face barriers to advancement. We support organizational policies and leadership pathways that center on equity, remove weight-based discriminatory barriers, and promote inclusion across all levels of employment. We recognize that weight stigma can intersect with other forms of bias, including those based on gender, race, disability and socioeconomic status, compounding barriers to opportunity.

5. CHAMPION ACCESS TO EVIDENCE-INFORMED OBESITY CARE

We support employer-sponsored or local community-based health services that reflect the latest evidence on obesity treatment. This includes access to a range of comprehensive interventions - including behavioural, nutritional, psychological, pharmacologic, and surgical options - tailored to individual needs, context, and preferences.

The International Obesity Collaborative and supporting organization stand united in supporting workplaces as key partners in creating inclusive, respectful, and equitable environments for people living with obesity. We offer our shared expertise, resources, and leadership to help employers advance this important work.

INTERNATIONAL OBESITY COLLABORATIVE MEMBERS

