



For Immediate Release

February 12, 2018

Media Contact

Chris Fox, 202.466.5524

Congress Scores a “C” for Work to Address Obesity in 2017

New report highlights efforts in 2017 and opportunities ahead in 2018

Washington D.C. – The Campaign to End Obesity released its second annual obesity report card, “Moving the Needle: Grading Congress’ Work to Tackle the Obesity Epidemic”, giving Congress a “C” grade for its work last year promoting policies to address the U.S. obesity epidemic. The Report Card showed an increase in—and broader support among Members of Congress for— select measures to combat the obesity epidemic, but also noted many missed opportunities on Capitol Hill for needed action, especially in nutrition policy.

In addition to evaluating Congress’ work, or lack thereof, in helping Americans access improved nutrition, safe physical activity opportunity, and more effective health care to prevent and treat obesity, the Report Card established a “Congressional Honor Roll,” highlighting ten members of Congress – 6 Republicans and 4 Democrats – who led some of the most noteworthy obesity prevention and treatment proposals in Congress last year. These Members included: Senators Capito (R-WV), Carper (D-DE), Cassidy (R-LA), Grassley (R-IA), Hatch (R-UT), Stabenow (D-MI), and Representatives Kind (D-WI), Meehan (R-PA), Paulsen (R-MN), and Schakowsky (D-IL). Among them, the legislators advanced new proposals to, among other things, boost access to nutritious foods for low-income children beyond the school setting; secure access for older Americans to obesity treatments not currently covered by Medicare; and ensure regular updates to the nation’s Physical Activity guidelines.

Today, obesity affects one in three U.S. adults and one in five U.S. children, and is among the greatest factors driving the nation’s health care costs. The cost to taxpayers of treating obesity and obesity-related conditions is already some \$315.8 billion annually and is likely to continue to grow.

Campaign Board Chairman, Scott Goudeseune, who is also President and CEO of the American Council on Exercise noted, “this report shows that we have a lot of work yet to do still in the areas of healthcare, nutrition and physical activity if we are to truly rein in rates of obesity across the country.” He continued, “we recognize that important progress has been made but, perhaps just as importantly, we stand ready to work with Congress in 2018 and beyond to identify and advance policies that will have a positive impact on obesity rates. This includes increasing access to evidence-based lifestyle interventions; safe and effective physical-activity opportunities; healthy, affordable foods; and healthcare options that individuals affected by obesity need to effectively manage their weight.”

In giving Congress a “C,” the Report Card reflected that Congress’ work as a whole in the three components of obesity policy – measures to increase access to healthy foods, to increase access to physically active lifestyles, and to promote change in the healthcare system to address patients with or at risk for obesity – showed progress, but highlighted that many important opportunities remain for policy changes that would help to reduce or reverse the American obesity epidemic. Among them were recommendations to enact the “Treat and Reduce Obesity Act,” (S. 830/H.R. 1953) which would enable Medicare beneficiaries access to a range of approved obesity treatments that have been excluded from insurance coverage; to advance new tax measures that will encourage private industry to invest in creating more healthy food and safe physical activity infrastructure in traditionally underserved communities and food deserts; and to fully fund the Centers for Disease Control programs that promote healthy eating and active living across the country.

The Report Card was created with input from many of the Campaign to End Obesity's Advisory Council members, including the American Council on Exercise, the American Heart Association and the United States Soccer Foundation. Please view the full Report Card by clicking [here](#). For more information on the Campaign to End Obesity, please visit our website at www.obesitycampaign.org.

###

About the Campaign to End Obesity

The Campaign to End Obesity brings together leaders from across industry, academia, and public health to provide with policymakers and their advisors information and guidance needed to make policy changes that will reverse one of the nation's costliest and most prevalent diseases.