

Amplifying the Patient Voice

Presented by: Joseph Nadglowski, OAC President and CEO



Outline

- **OAC and the Patient Voice**
- **The Importance of the Patient Voice**
- **The Patient Voice in Action**
- **Recommendations**

History of OAC

The Obesity Action Coalition is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to educating and advocating for individuals affected by the disease of obesity. We currently have more than 75,000 members nationwide.

MISSION STATEMENT:

To elevate and empower those affected by obesity through education, advocacy and support.

The Importance of the Patient Voice

- Obesity affects upwards of 100 million people in the U.S., yet it is often one of the most misunderstood and stigmatized diseases.
- Treatments exist for obesity, yet access to these treatments is widely limited throughout the nation.
- Obesity does not discriminate. It can affect people of all races, demographics, genders, and each experience is unique.

The Patient Voice in Action

- The OAC has been an integral part of raising the patient voice for the past 15 years. The patient voice can be found in the following areas:
 - **OAC-driven Efforts** – (Weight of the World, *Weight Matters Magazine*, *Your Weight Matters* Convention, OAC-led Focus Groups, Capitol Hill Visits)
 - **Public Awareness Campaigns** – Obesity Care Week, *Your Weight Matters* Campaign
 - **Patient Panels** – ObesityWeek® 2019 and 2020
 - **Mass Media**
 - **Patient Experience Advocates**





OAC Community Perspectives

Lessons I Learned After Growing up With Obesity

Interview with Emily Robinson

Growing up, we've all had experiences that left a permanent mark on us. For Emily Robinson, now a graduate from the University of North Carolina, one of those defining experiences was waging a war against childhood obesity.



These days, Emily is breaking the mold on the topic of obesity. Just by looking at her, most people can't tell she has struggled with her weight. However, this doesn't stop her from bringing up the topic. After learning many tough lessons through her experiences, Emily is on a mission to use her voice as an advocate. She's constantly working to change how the public views and treats people with obesity.

On her college campus, Emily also helped co-found a student group called OCEANS Lifestyles (alongside other OAC

Member Faith Anne Newsome) to equip and empower other young people in their journeys with weight and health. She still faces her own set of challenges around weight, but she is fueled by opening up and sharing her story.

Q&A with Emily Robinson

Q: While reflecting on your struggles with childhood obesity, what were some of the personal challenges you faced?

I struggled a lot with self-blame and I still do. I struggle with feeling like obesity is something I brought onto myself, rather than considering other factors that can contribute to obesity. For example, my mom had a really stressful job while I was growing up. She sometimes worked until 8:00 or 9:00 pm. This increased overall stress levels in the house, and stress plays a large role in weight. I think it did in my household. I also grew frustrated with doctors who would always bring up my weight and suggest that I "lose a few." As if I hadn't tried that I spent a lot of my time yo-yo dieting and trying fad diets I found online. They never worked long term, which was defeating.

When I look back at growing up and struggling with just health, peer health, physical work,

I also obesity is a problem, lost a weight, re-

My Turning Point and the Journey After





Many very sick COVID-19 patients, like some in this Brazilian intensive care unit, have obesity. GUSTAVO BASSO/NURPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

Why COVID-19 is more deadly in people with obesity— even if they're young

By [Meredith Wadman](#) | Sep. 8, 2020, 6:00 PM

COMMUNITY CHANGE

Obesity: After mom bought his burial plot, Manchester man changed his life and NJ

Jason Krynicki had one foot in the grave. Then he lost 100 pounds and gained a mission: establishing Obesity Care Week in New Jersey. It just became law.

[Jerry Carino](#) Asbury Park Press

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“
Let’s continue to elevate the
voices that help promote the
truth about weight and let
people with obesity know that
they’re not alone.”



Patricia Nece, JD, OAC Vice-Chairwoman

Recommendations

- Use the patient voice in your practices, research projects, etc.
- Understand that every voice is different and every journey with obesity is a lifelong one.
- Healthcare is one of the highest-rated areas of weight bias for someone with obesity. EMPATHY IS CRUCIAL to opening up the conversation of weight with patients.
- Lastly, remember that ALL PATIENTS are HUMAN and have most likely dealt with weight bias in EVERY FACET of their life from childhood to adulthood. THEIR VOICE MATTERS!

Thank You!

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