A recent example of advocacy in action can be seen in relation to BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee (BC/BS of Tenn.) and their IQ testing requirement for those seeking weight-loss surgery. This issue was brought to the OAC’s attention by a patient who was attempting to gain access to treatment for their obesity and was asked to take an IQ test prior to treatment.

Requiring an IQ test to access any medical procedure is wrong and by implementing such a requirement, BC/BS of Tenn. set a dangerous precedent of denying healthcare based on intelligence testing. Furthermore, this decision further perpetuated the negative stigma often associated with obesity.

In late 2006, the OAC issued multiple letters to BC/BS of Tenn. requesting that they rescind their decision for IQ testing. Unfortunately, BC/BS of Tenn. did not respond.

As the story began to gain interest, the OAC issued a national news release asking BC/BS of Tenn. to rescind their decision to administer IQ testing in order to gain access to treatment for weight-loss surgery. In addition, the OAC called on its constituents to take action and raise their voice.

Soon after the news release received national media attention by Fox News and many other media outlets, BC/BS of Tenn. decided to stop all IQ testing and removed the requirement from their insurance policy.

The elimination of the IQ testing requirement was a proactive step in the right direction for those seeking to access the much needed medical care of obesity.

Conclusion:
The success of the elimination of the IQ testing is a clear example of advocacy in action. The OAC and its constituents quickly addressed an issue that clearly affected and discriminated against all those affected by obesity trying to access care. This victory made it very apparent that your letters, phone calls and e-mails make a tremendous difference.

In recent weeks, the OAC has put a call out to all patients to provide the OAC with some of the more unusual experiences with accessing treatment. Do you know of an insurance provider's policy that contains an unusual requirement? If so, please send a copy of the policy with the requirement highlighted to the OAC National Office. Once we receive the policy, the OAC will research the policy for further information. For more information please, contact the OAC National Office at (800) 717-3117 or visit www.obesityaction.org.

Often, people ask, “Does advocacy work?”
The answer, YES!
The Obesity Action Coalition is a non-profit patient organization dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of the millions of Americans affected by obesity. By strictly representing the interests and concerns of obese patients, the OAC is a unique organization with a patient-focused approach to obesity. To learn more about the OAC, visit www.obesityaction.org or contact the National Office at (800) 717-3117.

**OAC Resources**

The OAC provides several beneficial resources for patients, as well as professionals. All OAC resources are complimentary and may be ordered in bulk. To request materials or an order form, please contact the OAC National Office at (800) 717-3117 or send an email to info@obesityaction.org.

### Brochures/Guides

- Are you living with Obesity?
- Advocacy Primer: Your Voice Makes a Difference
- BMI Chart
- Understanding Obesity Series
  - Understanding Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Obesity Poster
- Understanding Morbid Obesity Brochure
- Understanding Childhood Obesity Brochure
- Understanding Childhood Obesity Poster
- OAC Insurance Guide: Working with Your Insurance Provider
- State-specific Advocacy Guides
- Support Group Kit

### Newsletters

- **Obesity Action Alert** - the OAC’s free monthly electronic newsletter
- **OAC News** - OAC’s quarterly education and advocacy newsletter

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**OAC membership**

Membership in the Obesity Action Coalition allows the patient voice to be heard in the fight against obesity. By building a coalition of members, consisting of patients, family members and professionals, the OAC strives to educate and advocate on behalf of the millions who are affected by obesity. Membership benefits include:

- Official charter membership card/certificate
- **OAC News** - the OAC’s quarterly newsletter
- **Obesity Action Alert** - a monthly e-newsletter
- Representation through advocacy in addition to information on advocacy issues concerning patients

### Membership Application

Name: ____________________________
Company Name: __________________
Address: __________________________
City: __________ State: _____ Zip: __________
Phone: ____________________________
E-mail: ____________________________

### Payment Information

Enclosed is my check made payable to the Obesity Action Coalition for $ __________.

Please charge my credit card for my membership fee of $ __________.

Credit Card #: __________ Name on Card: ________
Expiration: __________ Signature: ________

* Different benefits apply. Contact the OAC National Office for more info.*

Please mail to: Obesity Action Coalition 4511 North Himes Ave, Suite 250 Tampa, FL 33614

Or fax to: (813) 873-7838

If you have questions about OAC membership, please contact the National Office at (800) 717-3117.