

U.S. Rep. Kind, Colleagues: Introduce bipartisan bill to help treat and reduce obesity

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Washington, DC – Today, Reps. Ron Kind (D-WI), Tom Reed (R-NY), Raul Ruiz, M.D. (D-CA), and Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M. (R-OH) introduced the bipartisan *Treat and Reduce Obesity Act*. This legislation will help address the obesity epidemic and reduce health care costs by expanding access to treatment options for Medicare beneficiaries affected by obesity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 40% of Americans aged 60 and older are considered medically obese. The National Institutes of Health rank complications from obesity and the chronic diseases and conditions associated with obesity – like diabetes, heart disease, lipid disorders, and high blood pressure – as the second leading cause of death in the United States. Obesity has also left many Americans at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

When Medicare Part D was created in 2006, there were no widely-accepted FDA-approved obesity drugs on the market and therefore Congress excluded obesity drugs from Part D coverage. However, thanks to significant medical advances, a number of FDA-approved weight loss drugs are now available.

“Obesity continues to affect millions of Americans, touching the lives of countless families, friends, and neighbors across our nation,” said Rep. Ron Kind. “It’s critical that we take steps to tackle this epidemic head on. I’m proud to introduce bipartisan legislation to expand access to obesity treatment options and help those looking to live a healthier lifestyle achieve their goals.”

“We are committed to helping millions of our fellow Americans fight obesity and

providing them with the resources they deserve to lead a healthier lifestyle. This bipartisan legislation increases access to cost-effective treatment options, and ensures people have a fair chance to better their quality of life in an affordable manner,” said Rep. Tom Reed.

“Obesity is a prevalent medical condition that puts individuals at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and we must take action to address its rise immediately,” said Dr. Raul Ruiz. “I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act to strengthen Medicare and help seniors access comprehensive health care services to tackle obesity head on. I’m grateful to Congressman Kind for his leadership and glad to support this bipartisan, common-sense legislation to help people of all ages live longer, healthier lives.”

“America has long struggled with the obesity epidemic in our country. We must double down on our efforts to help Americans struggling with obesity to receive the care they need. I’m proud to help lead this bipartisan effort to expand patients access to treatments that help with chronic weight management and will ultimately lead to a healthier and higher quality of life,” said Rep. Brad Wenstrup, D.P.M.