



June 27, 2024

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Honorable Jason Smith
Chairman
House Ways and Means Committee
1139 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Richard Neal
Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
1139 Longworth
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

Global Liver Institute strongly supports marking up legislation to extend coverage to obesity care by the Ways and Means Committee. We understand that the bill to be marked up will be limited in scope and view even small steps forward as progress. As members of the Obesity Care Action Network (OCAN), we have supported their efforts to work with the committee on the legislation to extend coverage as broadly as possible. Therefore, we support the amendment currently under consideration and view any expansion of coverage to be a victory for the patients we serve. We are grateful to learn the committee is moving the ball forward.

We urge the committee to recognize the relationship between nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) also known as metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD), and its advanced form, nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) also known as metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH), and obesity. Preventing liver disease is directly associated with treating and reducing obesity. Worldwide, NASH/MASH affects more than 148 million people and continues to become more prevalent each year. Research has closely linked the presence of NASH/MASH to metabolic comorbidities such as obesity and diabetes.¹ With the expectation that 1

¹ <https://aasldpubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hep.28431>

in 4 individuals will be obese by 2035,² it is crucial that we utilize unbiased and science-based approaches to both NASH/MASH and obesity care. We stand alongside the obesity advocacy community in recognizing obesity as a serious and complex condition that is a risk factor for developing NASH/MASH.

Thank you for your efforts to move a bill sooner rather than later. Progress is progress and we forward to working with all of you as the bill moves through the Congressional process. This is a positive first step.

Please reach out to Jeff McIntyre, GLI Vice President for Liver Health Programs, for additional information at jmcintyre@globalliver.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna R. Cryer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Donna R. Cryer, JD
President & CEO
Global Liver Institute

Cc:

Members of the House Ways and Means Committee

About Global Liver Institute

Global Liver Institute (GLI) was built to solve the problems that matter to liver patients, equipping advocates to improve the lives of individuals and families impacted by liver disease. GLI promotes innovation, encourages collaboration, and supports the scaling of optimal approaches to help eradicate liver diseases. GLI believes liver health must take its place on the global public health agenda commensurate with the prevalence and impact of liver illness. GLI is the only patient-created, patient-driven nonprofit organization tackling liver health and all liver disease holistically, operating globally. Follow GLI on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [YouTube](#).

² <https://www.worldobesityday.org>