

Date _____

Dear _____,

Knowing how important my health is to my productivity as an employee and citizen, I have been actively engaged in efforts to improve my obesity-related health concerns. Like others, I have struggled for years trying to manage my weight with countless diets and exercise efforts only to put the weight back on (and more). It is now at a point where this is impacting my life and I need evidence-based support just like any other chronic disease.

As you may be aware, *The World Health Organization*,¹ *the Canadian Medical Association*² and *Obesity Canada (formerly the Canadian Obesity Network)*³ all officially recognize obesity as a chronic disease. Unfortunately, society views my condition as a personal flaw or a self-imposed ailment not worthy of care and treatment. In fact, obesity is often classified in a “lifestyle” category in health benefit plans. This inaccurate categorization not only minimizes the complexity of the disease, but also serves to perpetuate the weight bias and stigma that individuals like myself endure on a daily basis. **According to current Clinical Practice Guidelines, evidence-based obesity treatment options may include medical management with medications, meal replacements, bariatric surgery, and behavioural interventions.**^{4,5}

I was therefore, disappointed upon further investigation when it became apparent that these evidence-based treatments are not covered under our health benefits plan, while it does, in fact, cover treatments for other chronic diseases, such as hypertension or diabetes. This is surprising considering that *a clinically significant weight loss of 5% to 10% is associated with marked improvement in cardiometabolic risk factors.*⁶⁻¹³ Canada’s authority on obesity prevention, treatment and management outlines the various evidence-based treatment options on their website, I invite you to explore www.obesitycanada.ca.¹⁴

From the perspective of an individual living with the disease, it appears that virtually all the experts in the field agree that obesity should be treated with the same dignity and vigour of any other chronic disease and that the available treatment options should be accessible for those who require them.^{4,5}

I respectfully request that you reconsider the approval of obesity treatment options and support individuals living with obesity, like myself, in our attempt to gain control of our health. Should the approval of such treatments be denied, please forward to me the company policy that is rejecting the coverage.

Sincerely,
