



FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education

Utilization Guide

Purpose

This utilization guide provides a summary of the **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** curriculum and contains suggestions to inspire the integration of obesity education into health care professional curricula.

Novo Nordisk Inc. provided funding support for the FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education curriculum. FORWARD was developed by Novo Nordisk Inc., in collaboration with a steering committee of obesity clinician experts to address gaps in obesity education and support the preparation of future health care providers to diagnose, care for and treat people with obesity. The goal of **FORWARD** is to present a complete, accurate, non-promotional and evidence-based picture of the current state of obesity.

Background

Obesity is a chronic, progressive disease with unique pathophysiology and high prevalence in the United States.¹ Nonetheless, obesity education is currently under-prioritized and inadequately represented in medical schools across the country.²

Many professional school programs do not adequately address core obesity competencies, with limited coverage of obesity management strategies (nutritional, physical, behavioral, and pharmacological and surgical interventions). Furthermore, they lack faculty expertise.^{3,4} When medical school deans were surveyed, only 10% of respondents reported that their graduating medical students were “very prepared” to manage patients with obesity.³

Integration of obesity education into professional school curricula has been shown to:

- Improve knowledge of obesity-related epidemiology, pathophysiology and metabolic factors, nutrition, physical activity and behavior modification, and pharmacological and surgical interventions⁵
- Improve attitudes toward people with obesity and increase positive patient outcomes by significantly reducing weight bias in students⁵

¹ CDC. Adult obesity facts. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html>. Accessed October 2022.

² Orjuela-Grimm M et al. BMC Fam Pract 2021;22(1):132

³ Butsch WS et al. J Med Educ Curric Dev 2020;7:2382120520973206

⁴ Butsch WS et al. BMC Med Educ 2020;20(1):23

⁵ Gayer GG, Weiss J, Clearfield M. J Am Osteopath Assoc. 2017;117(8):495-502

About the Program

The **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** program is a modular obesity curriculum for professional schools to support the training of future MDs, DOs, PharmDs, NPs and PAs in the management of obesity. Content is current as of August 2022.

Features:

- Built on the foundation of evidence-based OMEC (Obesity Medicine Education Collaborative) Competencies
- Contains over 11 hours of educational content, available free of charge
- 12 self-contained modules that can be viewed alone or in combination, made up of:
 - PowerPoint slide decks
 - Pre-recorded video lectures based on the slides delivered by expert Steering Committee members
 - Standalone audio recordings
 - Integrated multiple choice assessments for each module

Where can I find the modules?

Visit <https://bit.ly/3CtWqbe> or scan QR code for more information.



Costs

The **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** program PowerPoint modules and streaming content were developed using exclusively open-access materials and are available at no cost to users.

Expert Steering Committee

The **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** program was developed with guidance from the following Steering Committee of leading clinician experts in obesity:

- Daniel H. Bessesen, MD – *Fellowship Program Director, Colorado Obesity Medicine Fellowship; President of The Obesity Society*
- W. Scott Butsch, MD, MSc – *Director of Obesity Medicine, Bariatric and Metabolic Institute at Cleveland Clinic*
- Stacy Chronister, DO – *Clinical Assistant Professor, Oklahoma State University*
- Marc-Andre Cornier, MD – *Professor of Medicine & Director, Division of Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolic Diseases, Medical University of South Carolina*
- Sharon M. Fruh, PhD, FNP-BC, RN, FAANP – *Professor and Associate Dean of Research, College of Nursing, University of South Alabama*
- Robert F. Kushner, MD, MS – *Professor of Medicine, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University*

FORWARD Modules

Module	Name	Length
Module 1	Introduction to Obesity	45 min
Module 2	Pathophysiology of Obesity: Appetite and Metabolic Adaptation	60 min
Module 3	Pathophysiology of Obesity: Genetics, Environmental and Social Causes	60 min
Module 4	Addressing Stigma and Bias in Caring for Patients with Obesity	60 min
Module 5	Communicating with Patients, Family Members and Other Healthcare Professionals	60 min
Module 6	Complications and Comorbidities Associated with Obesity and Impact of Weight Loss	60 min
Module 7	Caring for Patients with Obesity	60 min
Module 8	Lifestyle Modifications and Behavioral Interventions for Obesity	60 min
Module 9	Anti-Obesity Medications for Chronic Weight Management	60 min
Module 10	Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery	60 min
Module 11	Pediatric and Adolescent Obesity	60 min
Module 12	From Theory to Practice: Treating Patients with Obesity*	60 min

**Module 12 is a case-based assessment module that incorporates content from previous modules and is therefore recommended to be completed at the end*

Suggestions to inspire the integration of obesity-focused education

The current obesity curriculum at the professional school (if available) can be evaluated to consider what educational gaps are present.

The appropriate fit of the **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education curriculum** within the overall professional school curricula can be determined. Existing curricula can be customized by leveraging the **FORWARD** program's flexible modular format to inspire curricular development at the relevant professional school.

Early **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** modules align with gastrointestinal, endocrine, and behavioral health systems learning typically found in the first two years of many professional school curricula. Modules addressing more clinical topics, such as obesity diagnosis and management can be introduced in later years of the students' education. General physiology, epidemiology, and metabolism concepts can be introduced prior to obesity-specific modules to provide context for students.

Once fit within the overall curricula has been determined, staff/faculty member(s) to teach obesity education should be identified, including leadership team members as needed. A focus can be placed on faculty availability and expertise with the relevant topic(s) across different medical specialities.

Video lectures and podcast recordings by the steering committee members are also available for each **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** module.

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