



OBESITY PAC

ASMBS POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE

*Advancing Bariatric Surgical Care
Through Advocacy*
Annual Report 2017-2018

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I. Mission Statement

The *ObesityPAC*'s mission is to preserve, protect and defend the inalienable right of the patient with obesity to have safe, effective, equitable and affordable access to care in all of the United States.

II. Letter from the Chair

October 2018

Dear Colleagues,

At the time of this writing, we are less than a month away from the mid-term elections and much is at stake. While some pundits are predicting a possible change in party control within one, or possibly both houses of Congress, we remain confident that our advocacy efforts will continue to have a profound impact on educating policymakers about the chronic and complex nature of the disease of obesity. We know this because obesity is non-partisan. It affects millions of Americans – Republicans, Democrats and Independents.

Since we gathered in Washington, DC one year ago for ObesityWeek 2017, ASMBS has made great strides in securing coverage for bariatric surgery and other obesity treatment avenues. We continue to publish studies demonstrating the profound impact that bariatric surgery has on durable weight loss and amelioration and even remission of so many obesity-related conditions. We are slowly but surely eliminating barriers and unnecessary hurdles facing those seeking surgical intervention for their severe obesity. We are educating health plans about the need to also provide coverage for comprehensive follow up care.

Though we are making inroads on this front, people with obesity continue to be stigmatized, preventing the effective treatment of the disease. That's why ASMBS is a founding member and a strong supporter of National Obesity Care Week (NOCW) – a national public awareness campaign to change the way we care about obesity and create a society that understands, respects and accepts the complexities of obesity and values science and clinically-based care.

During NOCW 2018, surgeons at BMI of Texas and Minimally Invasive Surgical Associates announced their donation of bariatric surgical procedures for two patients in need, bringing the total number of surgeries donated in honor of NOCW to nine. These and other efforts by NOCW champions and partners were instrumental in helping many in Congress recognize the importance of this

campaign, which led to the United States Senate unanimously passing a resolution late last year to designate one week a year as National Obesity Care Week.

Patients need access to all treatment avenues depending on where they are in the progression of their disease. For these reasons, ASMBS was pleased when earlier this year, the U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP) announced that it established a new USP drug category for anti-obesity agents. In this same vein, congressional support for the passage of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) has grown to record numbers with now 11 Senate champions and more than one-third of the House of Representatives supporting TROA!

Through the ObesityPAC, we have raised \$190,000 since its inception in 2015 with an 8% member participation rate. The ObesityPAC's goals are 20% member participation with a \$500,000 reserve to fund advocacy efforts on the federal, state, and local level. By working with ASMBS members, the ObesityPAC has already helped to introduce legislation to provide full obesity and diabetes coverage in Texas and Florida, secure Pennsylvania State Employee Coverage, lobby California State Insurance Commissioner to ban insurance-mandated pre-operative weight loss requirements and materially support over a dozen federal sponsors of the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act in the US Congress.

In addition, the ObesityPAC is continuing its annual traditions with the ObesityPAC reception where we will honor ObesityPAC Advocacy Award Recipients and Donors. We will continue to plan on making common cause with other societies and industry partners for joint advocacy efforts, conduct an annual survey of advocacy needs and create annual legislative agenda including universal diabetes and obesity treatment coverage.

For 2019, and in recognition of local needs and in partnership with the Access and State Chapter Committee Chairs (John Scott and Rachel Moore), the ObesityPAC is unveiling both a *State Lobby Toolkit and State Lobby Grant Program* to support state chapters with advocacy tools and travel funds for an annual obesity awareness day in their State Capital.

Imagine if 20 or 30 percent of members choose to support *ObesityPAC* this year. We could easily double or triple that \$190,000! I strongly encourage you to

support ObesityPAC so that the ASMBS can continue to educate policymakers about the critical needs of our patients!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Morton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Chair, *ObesityPAC*
Past-President, ASMBS





III. *ObesityPAC* Board, 2017-2018



John Morton, MD
FASMBS
Chair, *ObesityPAC*
Stanford, CA
Bariatric Surgeon



Carl Pesta, DO
FASMBS
Board Member
Mt. Clemens, Michigan
Bariatric Surgeon



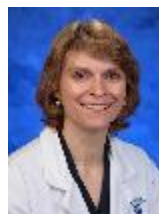
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ASMBS Executive Director,
Registered Dietician



C. Joe Northup, MD
Board Member
Dayton, Ohio
Bariatric Surgeon



Christopher Gallagher
Board Member
Washington, D.C.
Potomac Currents,
President



Ann Rogers, MD
FASMBS
Board Member
Hershey, Pennsylvania
Bariatric Surgeon



John D. Scott,
MD FASMBS
Board Member
Greenville, S.C.
Bariatric Surgeon



Jennifer Wynn
Treasurer
Gainesville, FL
ASMBS Deputy
Executive Director



IV. *ObesityPAC* Goals, 2017-2018

- Ensure there is coverage for all forms of bariatric surgery treatment
- Allow for affordable coverage via equitable pt payments (eliminate high deductibles)
- Safeguard safety of bariatric surgery through input upon all quality regulatory issues
- Create a national quality measure through National Quality Forum that requires all patients who have an appropriate BMI to have counseling regarding bariatric surgery
- Remove corporate impediments to sound medical care (pre-operative weight loss requirements by insurers)
- Create safe harbors to allow for creation of appropriate bundled payments
- Provide oversight of national self-insured corporations creating national networks to ensure adequate follow-up and access
- Work towards coverage of the entire continuum of care for the obese patient from counseling to medications to endoscopy to surgery
- Establish a sound prevention strategy that is linked to treatment
- Generate strong research funding base for the mechanisms and best practices of obesity prevention and treatment
- Identify and support candidates who are supportive of the ***ObesityPAC* Mission Statement** regardless of political orientation
- Develop and sustain member interest in the political process as advocates, participants, and candidates
- Bring a national focus to local issues to ensure that advocacy occurs everywhere
- Make common cause with other societies & industry partners for advocacy efforts
- Conduct an annual survey of advocacy needs
- Create annual legislative agenda for universal diabetes & obesity treatment coverage
- State Lobby Toolkit & State Lobby Grant Program to support state chapters w/ advocacy tools & travel funds for an obesity awareness day in their State Capital
- At least 20% Surgeon Member Participation and \$100,000 raised annually
- 100% support from ASMBS leadership through the Executive Council, State Chapter Presidents, and Committee Chairs

V. ASMBS Weekend *ObesityPAC* Reception June 15, 2018 at the InterContinental NY Barclay Hotel



As a special thank you to our *ObesityPAC* contributors for their support we had an *ObesityPAC* Reception ASMBS Weekend 2018. Guests enjoyed New York Deli and Manhattan cocktails on Friday, June 15th from 5-6:30pm at the InterContinental NY Barclay Hotel.



VI. *ObesityPAC* Advocacy Award Recipients

Please congratulate **Dr. Ann Rogers** and **Dr. Maher El Chaar**, both of **Pennsylvania** as the recipients of the 2018 *ObesityPAC* Advocacy Award. These awards are presented at the *ObesityPAC* Reception on November 13th at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, TN.



Dr. Maher El Chaar with his wife **Judy**, and daughters, **Celine**, age 3, and **Ella**, 18 months, and at his home with Pennsylvania Governor **Tom Wolf**



“As a bariatric surgeon, I truly believe deep in my heart that it's a moral obligation to fight day and night on behalf of our patients to get them the bariatric coverage that they so desperately need and deserve. Advocacy is a commitment and a duty and one honorable way for bariatric surgeons to have a long lasting and positive impact on patients and their families” – Dr. Maher El Chaar



Dr. Ann Rogers with her sons **Ben** and **Jeremy**, in **Washington, D.C.** “Rattling chains on Capitol Hill yet again”, and with her advocacy buddies **Drs. Shanu Kothari**, **Richard Peterson**, **Joe Northup**, **John Scott**, and **Neil Floch** at the **ASMBS Weekend 2018 ObesityPAC Reception** in **New York City**



VII. 3rd Annual *ObesityPAC* Donor Recognition Event at ObesityWeek 2018, Nashville, TN

An *ObesityPAC* goal is to leverage our annual meeting to meet with local representatives in their own backyard and advocate for our patients. To create a personal connection with an elected representative is invaluable in securing an audience with these policy makers. We are able to meet these policy makers and at the same time recognize our top contributors to the *ObesityPAC* at a premium event befitting our high ideals and purpose. This year in Nashville, TN, in order to accomplish our avowed goal of securing access of care for our patient with obesity, an *ObesityPAC* reception will be held. Join us next year in Las Vegas, NV for another first-class event.

WHEN: November 13, 6-8 PM

**WHERE: Country Music Hall of Fame, BMI Hall
222 Fifth Avenue (Next to the Omni Hotel)**

WHO: All *ObesityPAC* Donors (if you haven't given yet, please attend and consider a \$150 donation online [HERE](#) or at the door)

♪ Recognize *ObesityPAC* Donors & Access Chair, John Scott

♪ Meet Past, Present & Future ASMBS Presidents Brethauer, Demaria, Hutter, Kothari, Ponce, Mattar, Morton & Rosenthal

♪ Celebrate our *Order of Oval Inaugural Ceremony* for *ObesityPAC* Members who have given >\$5000):
Stacy Brethauer, MD; Chris Eagon, MD; Rami Lufti, MD; Rachel Moore, MD; Raul Rosenthal, MD

♪ Honor 2018 *ObesityPAC* Award Recipients:
Drs. Ann Rogers and Maher El Chaar

♪ PLUS SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER!!!!!!

VIII.2016-2018 ObesityPAC Recipient Honorees



Senator Tom Carper (D-DE)



Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA)



Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)



Representative Ron Kind (D-WI)



Representative Erik Paulsen (R-MN)



State Insurance Commissioner Dave Jones (D-CA)



State Representative Julio Gonzalez (R-FL)



State Senator Jose Menendez (D-TX)



Governor Tom Wolf (D-PA)



Canidate Amber Huett Garcia for Tennessee Legislature (D-TN)

The *ObesityPAC* also gave to both Democratic and Republican Nominees for US President in 2016.

IX. ObesityPAC Donors



Order of the Oval donors are the “Trailblazers,” the most influential level of profoundly committed benefactors who have pledged **\$5,000 or more**, demonstrating their deep commitment to political advocacy in Washington. Thank you to our 2017-2018 Order of the Oval members!



**Stacy Brethauer,
MD FASMBS**



**Rachel Moore,
MD FASMBS**



**J. Chris Eagon,
MD FASMBS**



**Raul Rosenthal,
MD FASMBS**



**Rami Lutfi, MD
FASMBS**



President's Council donors are “Leaders of the PAC.” By pledging **\$2500-\$5000**, they demonstrate their deep commitment to political advocacy in Washington. Thank you to our 2017-2018 President's Council members!

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