



# THE OBESITY SOCIETY

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## **Obesity Society President Applauds Inclusion of Obesity in Democratic Party Platform**

*Obesity Policy Forums to be held in conjunction with National Party Conventions*

Silver Spring, MD – Gary Foster Ph.D., President of The Obesity Society, today applauded the action of the Democratic Party Platform drafting committee in acknowledging for the first time in any national party platform the importance of addressing the obesity epidemic in the United States.

The Writing Committee for the Platform finished its work on Thursday and has sent to the full Platform Committee proposed language. Dr. Foster said, "We are pleased to see a major political party recognize the importance of obesity to the health of Americans and to the health care system overall. Nearly every week, we see the accumulation of evidence of the health and fiscal problems arising from obesity. We applaud the work of the Writing Committee and we hope the Republican Party platform will also acknowledge this important issue."

Morgan Downey, Executive Vice President of the Society agreed: "It is particularly significant that the Committee demonstrated its understanding of the wide-ranging impacts of obesity by referring to it repeatedly – in terms of the greater health care issue; in terms of its proper place in prevention and wellness strategies; and in recognizing the importance of engaging all of the appropriate parties in confronting the alarming rate of childhood obesity."

Foster also announced that the Obesity Society's annual policy conference – "The Challenge of Obesity for Policy Makers" – will be held in conjunction with both the Democratic and Republican National Party Conventions in Denver and Minneapolis, respectively. The conferences will be co-sponsored by the Universities of Colorado and Minnesota, the Mayo Clinic and George Washington University and will feature roundtables of policymakers at both the national and local levels, in addition to representatives of the Party nominees. Details regarding the events at the Conventions are below.

Specifically, the Platform states:

“Our nation faces epidemics of obesity and chronic diseases as well as new threats like pandemic flu and bioterrorism. Yet despite all of this, less than four cents of every health care dollar is spent on prevention and public health.” (page 8)

*“An Emphasis on Prevention and Wellness.* Chronic diseases account for 70 percent of the nation’s overall health care spending. We need to promote healthy lifestyles and disease prevention and management especially with health promotion programs at work and physical education in schools. All Americans should be empowered to promote wellness and have access to preventive services to impede the development of costly chronic conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension.” (page 9)

*“Public Health and Research.* Health and wellness is a shared responsibility among individuals and families, school systems, employers, the medical and public health workforce and government at all levels. We will ensure that Americans can benefit from healthy environments that allow them to pursue healthy choices. Additionally, as childhood obesity rates have more than doubled in the last 30 years, we will work to ensure healthy environments in our schools.” (page 10)

The Obesity Society forum at the Democratic Convention will be held on Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup> from 8AM-12:30PM at the Denver Museum of Art, Hamilton Building in the Sharp Auditorium. The Forum will be moderated by Sally Squires, syndicated columnist of the weekly Lean Plate Club column. A continental breakfast will be served.

Details on the panelists and event schedule will be released next week.

The forum at the Republican convention will be held on Tuesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> from 8AM to 12:30PM at the James J. Hill Library in St Paul. Lesley Stahl of CBS News 60 Minutes will moderate the Republican forum.

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