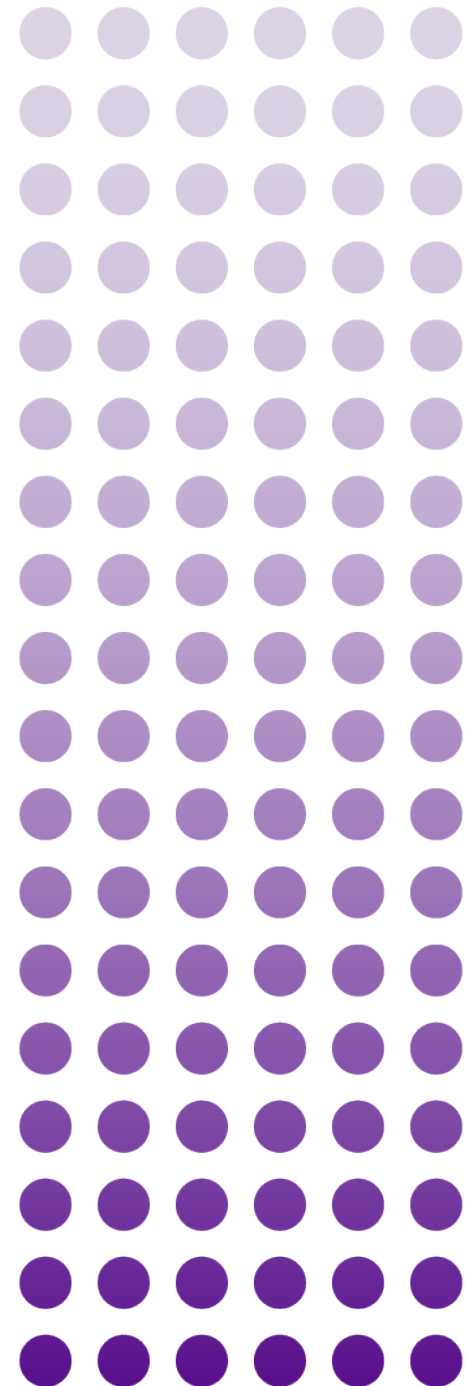




# Weight Management Specialist - Provider Experience

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## Dr. Lofton's Disclosures

- Novo Nordisk – speaker's bureau, research funding, advisory board
- Eli Lilly – speaker's bureau, research funding, national research leader

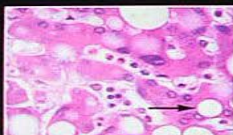
# So A Patient Walked in Today...



- ◉ Male
  - ◉ Age 40
  - ◉ Height 5'6"
  - ◉ Weight 250 lb
  - ◉ BMI 40
  - ◉ Blood Pressure 140/90
- Lisinopril 20 mg RTC 1 -2 months

# THE trouble WITH FAT

To get an inside look at how fat affects the body's organs, we asked two women—one morbidly obese, the other a healthy weight—to spend five hours under a state-of-the-art open scanner to get a high-resolution magnetic resonance imaging scan (MRI). Open scanners—as opposed to the more common enclosed MRI tubes—are in demand as patients get larger.



MICROGRAPH: FAT GLOBULES IN LIVER TISSUE

## LIVER DISEASE

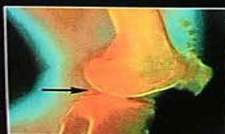
Many obese people develop deposits of fat inside the liver, a condition that can progress to cirrhosis in about 10 percent of cases, and occasionally to liver failure.



X-RAY: COLON CONSTRICTED FROM CANCER

## COLON CANCER

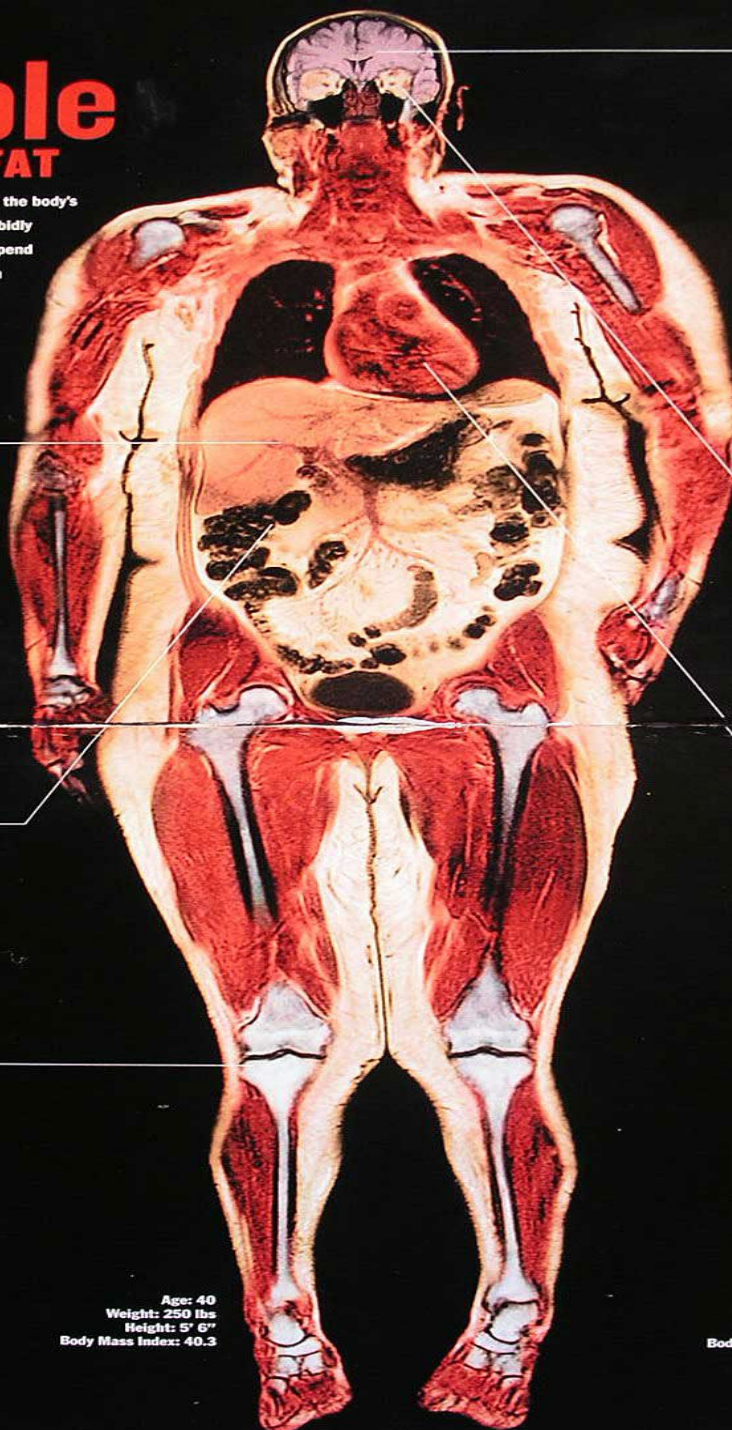
Obese people are at greater risk of colon cancer. Abdominal fat appears to fat elsewhere, risk more than fat elsewhere, which may explain why men (who tend to store fat in their abdomens) have a higher risk.



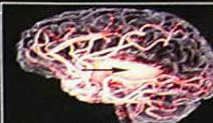
X-RAY: ARTHRITIC KNEE JOINT

## OSTEOARTHRITIS

Being overweight places additional strain on the spine, hip, and knee joints, causing a loss of cartilage. As the cartilage deteriorates, joint space narrows and bones grind together.



Age: 40  
Weight: 250 lbs  
Height: 5' 6"  
Body Mass Index: 40.3



MAGNETIC RESONANCE ANGIOGRAM OF A STROKE

## STROKE

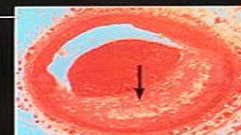
The risk of having a stroke is two to four times higher in people with type 2 diabetes, 90 percent of whom are overweight. Stroke occurs either when a blood vessel ruptures or a blood clot blocks an artery to the brain, causing damage to nerve cells.



OPHTHALMOLOGIC IMAGING: DAMAGED BLOOD VESSELS IN EYE

## TYPE 2 DIABETES

People with excess body fat—especially in the abdominal area—often become resistant to insulin, a substance that helps the body store glucose. When glucose levels soar, diabetes results. One side effect is damage to blood vessels in the retina, which can lead to blindness.



MICROGRAPH: PLAQUE BUILDUP IN ARTERY

## HEART DISEASE

Obese people tend to have elevated cholesterol, which can lead to plaque buildup in the arteries. They are twice as likely to have hypertension.



Age: 36  
Weight: 120 lbs  
Height: 5' 5"  
Body Mass Index: 20.0



## Obesity prevalence in American adults

- Age 20- 39 yr – 40%
- Age 40- 59 yr – 44.8%
- Age >60 y – 42.8% (early mortality)
- 110 million American adults with obesity
- 6500 obesity medicine specialists
- 17K patients per specialist ?????

# Why is Obesity Management Suboptimal?

- Lack of time
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of reimbursement
- Physician's overweight/ obesity
- Biased perception of patient
  - Lacking in willpower, sloppy, futile to treat

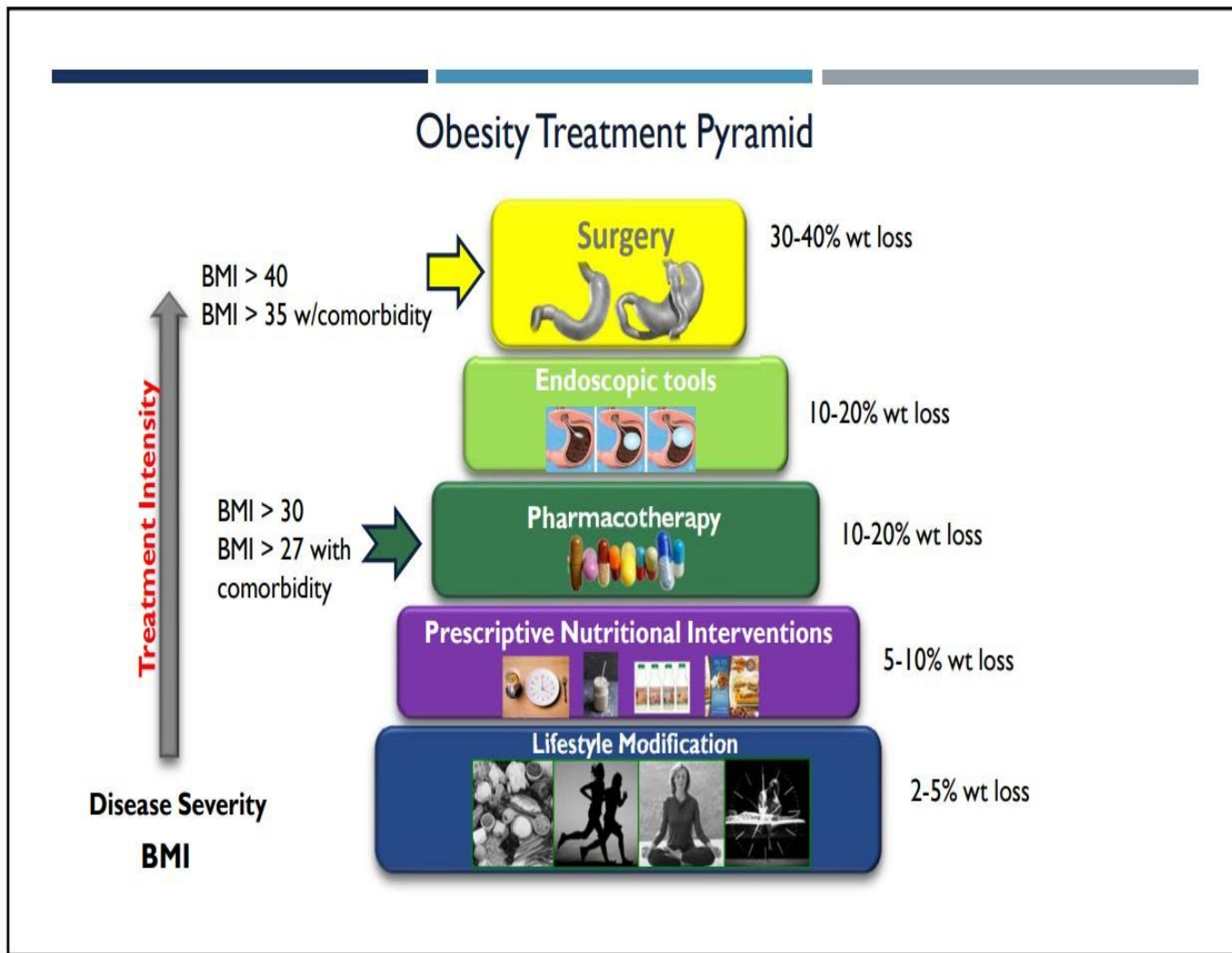
## Prior Authorization

- Prior authorization (PA) is a cost-control process requiring health care providers to qualify for payment for a medication, surgery, or procedure by obtaining approval from health insurers before the service is rendered
- December 2020, 1000 physicians surveyed stated PA still poses significant challenges for physicians and patients
- PA often require the patient to have tried and failed less expensive medications prior to approval – no merit given to providers' clinical judgment



# **CURRENT TREATMENT OPTIONS**





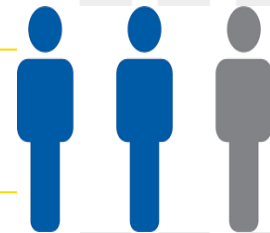
Fitch, A. (2021, Sept) *“Better Together: Combination Therapy for Optimal Obesity Therapy”* OMA 2021 Fall Convention , Chicago, IL, United States. [obesitymedicine.org/bettertogethercombination](https://obesitymedicine.org/bettertogethercombination)

## Current State of CMS Treatment Coverage

Obesity Behavioral Therapy  
( BMI >30) – Part B

Bariatric Surgery BMI (>35  
kg/m<sup>2</sup>)

Medical Therapies  
Excluded



>80% of prescriptions for AOM are not filled due to lack of coverage/ high drug costs

# What Can Be Done NOW to Bridge the Gap?



# Bridging the Gap

1. Weight Bias/ Sensitivity Training for ALL
2. Access to care
  - Community based programs
  - Healthy options in cafes, vending
  - Coverage for dieticians, obesity codes, weight management specialists
  - Rewards for activity (not only gym memberships)
  - Medication coverage – **opt-in on insurance riders**
  - Bariatric surgery coverage
3. EMR Tools to assist non-specialists in advising, prescribing, referring
  - BMI as a vital sign with buttons to direct to prescriptions, referrals, standardized lifestyle handouts
4. Medical education for providers