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March 17, 2009

Via Facsimile: (601) 359-3741

Governor Haley Barbour
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Dear Governor Barbour:

On behalf of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) and our more than 12,000 members, I am writing to urge you to sign HB 1530 into law which would provide coverage of the treatments of obesity through the health insurance provided to state and school employees in Mississippi.

As you know, Mississippi leads the nation in obesity rates and as such, it is important that you encourage both the prevention and treatment of obesity. Focusing solely on prevention efforts is no longer enough as nearly 40 percent of your constituents are obese. Mississippi residents, including your state and school employees, need help in addressing their weight issues as the medical costs of obesity related illnesses are skyrocketing. Your providing access to the treatments of obesity to your employees, including testing bariatric surgery coverage for a limited number of employees (100), is a good step in the right direction to not only help your employees improve their health, but also lower their healthcare costs. It also sets a great example to other employers and insurers to develop similar programs for those to which they provide health coverage.

Last year, the OAC led the charge in condemning Mississippi legislators for their proposed legislation banning obese people from dining in restaurants and called for more constructive and active legislation that would help those struggling with their weight. We do, however, give credit when credit is due. This year, Mississippi legislators have delivered with HB1530 meaningful legislation that can and will make a difference. We believe that your signing such legislation would be an important step in slowing Mississippi's dramatic obesity rates.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance on this or any other obesity related issue. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.
President/CEO

About the OAC: The OAC is a national non-profit organization comprised primarily of individuals who have been personally affected by obesity. In addition, our membership includes more than 1,000 healthcare providers who care for those affected. Our strong belief is that obesity, like other diseases, must be both prevented and treated. Those who are currently obese, or at risk for developing obesity, and are ready to make a change in their lives should have expanded access to both prevention and treatment avenues.