



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 clinical experts to address gaps in obesity education and support the preparation of future health care providers to diagnose, care for and treat persons with obesity. The goal of **FORWARD** is to present an evidence-based, non-promotional depiction 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/adult-obesity-facts/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html. Accessed December 2025.

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 December 2025.

Features:

- Built on the foundation of evidence-based OMEC (Obesity Medicine Education Collaborative) Competencies
- Contains over 6 hours of educational content, available free of charge
- 13 self-contained modules that can be viewed alone or in combination, consisting of:
 - PowerPoint slide decks
 - Video lectures based on the slides delivered by expert Steering Committee members
 - Integrated multiple-choice assessments for each module

Where can I find the modules?

Visit <https://www.novonordiskmedical.com/therapeutic-areas/obesity/forward.html> 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 management:

- Stacy Chronister, DO – *Clinical Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine, Department of Medical Education, Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences*
- Robert F. Kushner, MD – *Professor, Departments of Medicine and Medical Education, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine*
- Octavia Pickett-Blakely, MD, MHS – *Professor of Clinical Medicine, Director, Penn Center for GI Nutrition, Vice Chief, Faculty Development and Community Engagement, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine*
- Daniel Riche, PharmD, BCPS, CDE – *Professor of Pharmacy Practice and Research Professor, National Center for Natural Products Research and Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Mississippi*
- Sara Wooten, MSN, APRN, FNP-C – *Certified Family and Obesity Medicine Nurse Practitioner, Mercy Clinic Weight and Wellness, Co-Founder and Senior Provider, The Saint Louis Obesity Society, Founding Member and Vice President*

FORWARD Modules

Module	Name	Length
Module 1	Introduction to Obesity	15 mins
Module 2	Pathophysiology of Obesity: Appetite Dysregulation, and Metabolic and Hormonal Adaptation	25 mins
Module 3	Pathophysiology of Obesity: Genetic, Environmental, and Social Causes	15 mins
Module 4	Addressing Stigma and Bias in Caring for Patients with Obesity	15 mins
Module 5	Communication in Obesity Care: With Patients, Family Members, and Healthcare Professionals	20 mins
Module 6	Obesity-Related Complications and the Impact of Weight Loss	50 mins
Module 7	Caring for Patients with Obesity	20 mins
Module 8	Lifestyle Modifications and Behavioral Interventions for Obesity	15 mins
Module 9	FDA-Approved Anti-Obesity Medications for Chronic Weight Management	30 mins
Module 10	Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery	15 mins
Module 11	Pediatric and Adolescent Obesity Management	15 mins
Module 12	Special Considerations for Weight Management Across Adult Populations	30 mins
Module 13	From Theory to Practice: Treating Patients with Obesity*	15 mins

**Module 13 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.

Needs assessment:

- 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.

Curriculum layout:

- Early **FORWARD: Focus on Obesity Education** modules align with pathophysiological concepts including genetics, 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 stigma, bias, communication, 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.

Faculty selection:

- 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 specialties.

Curriculum delivery:

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

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