



Bipartisan Representatives Reintroduce the Nutrition CARE Act to Expand Coverage for Eating Disorders Treatment for Medicare Beneficiaries

WASHINGTON, D.C (January 11, 2024)- The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy, & Action (EDC) applauds Representatives Judy Chu (D-CA-28), Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-08), Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE-AL), and Don Bacon (R-NE-02) for reintroducing [Nutrition Counseling Aiding Recovery for Eating Disorders \(Nutrition CARE\) Act](#). The Nutrition CARE Act will provide Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) for seniors and persons with disabilities who are affected by eating disorders under Medicare Part B.

Comprehensive care for successful eating disorders treatment is comprised of four critical care components: psychiatric, psychological, medical, and MNT. MNT is an evidence-based medical approach to treating chronic conditions, particularly eating disorders, through an individualized nutrition plan. Unfortunately, Medicare Part B does not currently cover MNT for eating disorders. The Nutrition CARE Act will allow Medicare Part B beneficiaries affected by eating disorders to access MNT with coverage that is commensurate with other medical conditions.

Prevalence estimates of eating disorders among seniors is consistent with the general population—3-4%.¹ For individuals on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), 3% of men and 6% of women are estimated to have an eating disorder.² Importantly, the lack of comprehensive treatment can further compromise the health of older populations suffering from chronic conditions.

“The EDC is committed to increasing access to comprehensive eating disorder care, particularly for individuals whose conditions are often overlooked and/or undertreated,” **said Dr. Christine Peat, PhD, FAED, LP, EDC Board of Directors President**. “The Nutrition CARE Act represents a crucial advancement in the ability for individuals with eating disorders to access the full suite of services they need to achieve full and lasting recovery, and we are thrilled to have bipartisan support in this effort.”

“As a 68-year-old Medicare beneficiary who has been battling an eating disorder for over 50 years, I recently needed a consultation and advice from a dietitian,” **said Wendy R. Levine, EDC Ambassador**. “Because of the Medicare Part B policy of only covering MNT for patients who have diabetes or kidney disease, I was left to fend for myself. “Every 52 minutes, someone

¹ Mangweth-Matzek B, Hoek HW. Epidemiology and treatment of eating disorders in men and women of middle and older age. *Curr Opin Psychiatry*. 2017;30(6):446–451. doi: 10.1097/YCO. 0000000000000356

² Ibid.

tragically dies as a direct result of an eating disorder. The Nutrition CARE Act will enable people to get the help they need and save many lives.”

“In the eating disorder field, we’re not used to good news. The Nutrition CARE Act is different because there’s no downside,” **said Jessica Setnick, Director of IFEDD, The International Federation of Eating Disorder Dietitians.** “A full year of MNT costs less than one week in the hospital, so this is the rare opportunity to save lives AND dollars.

“Eating disorders are often thought of as a young person’s disease, but the prevalence of eating disorders among seniors is consistent with the general population and when left untreated can lead to heart failure, kidney failure, diabetes, hypoglycemia, and more,” **said Representative Judy Chu.** “We know this can be prevented with treatment and therapy, but only if those are made accessible to seniors. That’s why I’m joining my colleagues on a bipartisan basis to introduce the Nutrition CARE Act to provide patients with Medicare coverage a more comprehensive, specialized approach to combating eating disorders.”

"An estimated 28 million Americans face eating disorder challenges that put their health in danger," **said Representative Brian Fitzpatrick.** "Our bipartisan Nutrition CARE Act will ensure that Medicare covers critical treatment for those who need it most."

"I am proud to stand with my colleagues across the aisle to reintroduce the Nutrition CARE Act, a bill that ensures our healthcare system is responsive to the needs of all Medicare beneficiaries, including those battling eating disorders,” **said Representative Blunt Rochester.** “The inclusion of Medical Nutrition Therapy under Medicare Part B recognizes the critical role of nutrition in mental and physical health and will help improve health outcomes for millions of Americans.”

“I am pleased to join this bipartisan legislation that increases access to necessary treatments for Medicare beneficiaries suffering from eating disorders,” **said Representative Don Bacon.** “Complete care is necessary when treating these disorders, and Medical Nutrition Therapy for seniors and persons with disabilities is needed, in addition to three other cornerstones of treatment: psychiatry, psychological and medical.”

The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders, and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at <https://eatingdisorderscoalition.org/>.

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