



We urge you to cosponsor the Federal Response to Eliminate Eating Disorders Act (FREED Act)

The FREED Act is a comprehensive bill on eating disorders addressing research, treatment, education and prevention. Introduced by Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin in the House (HR 1448). Senators Harkin, Klobuchar and Franken introduced it in the Senate (S. 481).

Research Initiatives: Fund a research agenda in order to:

- ***Know the numbers.*** Determine the prevalence, incidence, and correlates of all eating disorders (anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder and eating disorder not otherwise specified).
- ***Know the death rates.*** Determine the morbidity and mortality rates associated with all eating disorders and provide a public report of this data annually.
- ***Know the costs or “economic burden” of eating disorders.*** Undertake the necessary investigations to conduct an economic analysis of the costs of eating disorders in the United States, including years of productive life lost, missed days of work, reduced work productivity, costs of treatment, hospitalizations, costs of medical and psychiatric comorbidities, (cost to family, cost to society) etc.
- ***Better understand the etiology of eating disorders and effective treatments.***
- ***Provide training opportunities for new researchers.***

Education & Prevention Initiatives

- ***Study mandatory BMI reporting in school.*** Determine the outcome of measuring BMI in schools and reporting the results to parents (including measuring eating disorders symptoms, and incidence of teasing or bullying based on body size).
- ***Grant Program of the Education and Training for all Health Professionals.*** Train health professionals, to identify, prevent, appropriately treat and address the complications of eating disorders (using a team approach).
- ***Addressing eating disorders in the Schools.*** Programs to train educators on effective eating disorders screening, detection, prevention and appropriate methods of assistance. Programs to improve the identification of students with eating disorders and increasing student and parent awareness of eating disorders.
- ***Educating the public through Public Service Announcements (PSAs).*** Use PSAs to educate the public on types and the seriousness of (prevalence, co-morbidities, health consequences –both physical and mental) eating disorders, how to obtain help, discrimination and bullying based on mental illness, body size, and the effects of media on self esteem and body image.
- ***Bring eating disorders into already existing obesity initiatives.*** Federally funded campaigns to fight obesity should also address eating disorders. Federal studies should include eating disorder related questions.

Increase Access to Adequate and Appropriate Treatment

In the House bill:

- **All Americans with eating disorders deserve access to care.** Any insurer that provides health coverage for physical illness must provide coverage for eating disorders.
- **Care according to universally accepted criteria.** Insurers are to follow standards of care as written in the Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Patients with Eating Disorders by the American Psychiatric Association.
 - ✓ **The treatment setting must be appropriate to the patient's needs and clinical presentation.** Decisions regarding the treatment setting must include individual variables such as age, sex, ability to manage severity or co-morbidity, family involvement, and staff expertise and training.
 - ✓ **Eating Disorders are complex conditions and require comprehensive treatment approaches.** All treatment modalities should be covered, including but not limited to family, individual and group therapies, nutrition counseling, psychopharmacology, body Image therapy, and medical treatment.
- **Eating disorders treatment made accessible to people of low income** by including eating disorder treatment to the services covered by Medicaid. The bill also requires that children covered by Medicaid be screened for eating disorders.
- **Advocacy support for those who are sick.** The bill includes a Patient Advocacy Program where individuals needing care have support navigating insurance and receiving the treatment they need.

In the Senate bill:

- **Eating disorders treatment made accessible to people of low income** by including eating disorder treatment to the services covered by Medicaid. The bill also requires that children covered by Medicaid be screened for eating disorders.
- **Advocacy support for those who are sick.** The bill includes a Patient Advocacy Program where individuals needing care have support navigating insurance and receiving the treatment they need.