



## BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) REDUCTION PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

### Obesity: A National Epidemic

#### Introduction:

By every measure, obesity has reached epidemic proportions in America. More than one third of U.S. adults — more than 72 million people —are obese.<sup>1</sup>

**Lost Life:** Obesity is a matter of life and death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that obesity-related illness is the second leading preventable cause of death in the United States.

Obesity can take 13 to 20 years off of a person's life by putting obese people at risk for more than 30 diseases including heart disease, diabetes and cancer.<sup>2</sup>

#### What is BMI?

Body Mass Index, also known as BMI, is a mathematical measurement of your weight in relation to your height, and is used to determine if you are underweight, at a healthy weight, overweight, obese or morbidly obese.

Where does your BMI fall within the following?

- BMI below 18.5 is considered underweight
- BMI between 18.5 and 24.9 is considered healthy
- BMI between 25.0 and 29.9 is considered overweight

#### Financial Costs:

The “A Heavy Burden: The Individual Costs of Being Overweight and Obese in the United States”, is the first to quantify these costs through rigorous academic research.<sup>3</sup>

Authored by Avi Dor, professor of health economics and director of George Washington University's Economics and Health Policy Program, Christine Ferguson, professor of health policy, and graduate students Casey Langwith and Ellen Tan, the report employed a series of measures—including indirect costs like lost productivity and direct costs like obesity-related medical expenditures—to estimate the price tag of obesity at the individual level.<sup>4</sup>

The research team found that the annual individual cost of being obese is \$4,879 for women and \$2,646 for men. When the value of lost life is added, the results are even more dramatic: \$8,365 and \$6,518 for women and men respectively, as reported during the release, which included a panel of esteemed obesity experts moderated by former U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher.

The Affordable Care Act or more commonly known as "Obamacare" has in essence made BMI a fourth vital sign that not only requires all physicians to address a patient's BMI on patient office visits but have a method of education for his or her patients in order to understand and combat the cost and quality of life factors associated with excess weight.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 2016

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization, June 2016

<sup>3</sup> Dor, Avi. “A Heavy Burden: The Individual Costs of Being Overweight and Obese in the United States”, September 2010.

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