



**national association  
to advance  
fat acceptance**

## NAAFA Newsletter

February  
2016

### Greetings!

Please do tell us what you think about the newsletter! [pr@naafa.org](mailto:pr@naafa.org)

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## Surgery Will NOT Cure Discrimination

NAAFA has sent a letter to the Centralized Case Management Operations, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services countering a complaint filed by the Obesity Care Continuum (OCC). The OCC has stated that "the state health insurance exchanges created by the ACA fail to require coverage for bariatric surgery as well as other evidence-based treatments for the chronic disease of obesity" and are therefore in violation of Section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The OCC claims: "Section 1557 of the ACA prohibits sex discrimination in the provision of healthcare benefits. Because obesity creates economic and social hardships that are unique to women, and the insurance plans offered by state health exchanges prevent many women with obesity from remedying such hardships, we believe that these insurance plans disparately impact, and thus discriminate against, women. . . ."

NAAFA does not deny the realities of economic and social hardships for women with large bodies. However, rather than surgically forced weight loss as the answer to discrimination and stigma, eliminate the discrimination through promoting size diversity, Equality At Every Size and Health At Every Size.

"In all of the operations we perform, there is a finite weight loss, and it can be classified in the gastric bypass of about **65% of excess [weight]** - the sleeve - about 50%, the banding - maybe 35%, 40%. **Patients don't lose forever**", stated Dr. Shikaro, M.D., at a meeting of the Food and Drug Administration's Medical Devices Advisory Committee. A 300 lb. patient can expect a 75 lb. weight loss with the "less invasive" sleeve leaving them weighing 225 lbs. and still classified as obese. This will not resolve the problem of discrimination.

NAAFA maintains that:

- A person's weight/body mass index (BMI) does not equate health nor is it a disease
- Bariatric surgeries DO NOT have a proven long-term track record of weight loss and health stabilization (more than 10 years)

### Remembrance and Love

#### February Video of the Month

February is a month of remembrance and love. In the US, we remember our history by celebrating Black History Month while also celebrating romance and love on Valentine's Day. This video embraces both by showing us brilliant designs by a hugely talented black designer, Teri Ketchens, of Terilyn K Bridal. Her innovative plus-size bridal gowns and intimates were featured at New York's Bridal Fashion Week last fall. Enjoy the show!

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=FzYX493ZaPI>

### Quick Links

**[NAAFA.org](#)**  
**[NAAFA-CC.org](#)**

#### **Facebook**

[Main](#)

[Cause](#)

[SF Bay](#)

[Capital](#)

[Orange County](#)

[Los Angeles](#)

[Clark County](#)

[End Bullying Now](#)

#### **Twitter**

**[MySpace](#)**

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- The adverse effects of bariatric surgery result in chronic health problems
- Rather than surgically forced weight loss as the answer to discrimination and stigma, eliminate the discrimination through promoting size diversity

NAAFA suggests adopting a Health at Every Size approach to improving health for people of all body shapes and sizes as an alternative to the current proposal. We believe that "surgical methods" are not the answer people are being told they are, and that it's time for a change in how we look at health relative to a person's body size. We come in all sizes.

You can read the full text of NAAFA's response at [www.naafaonline.com/dev2/Ltr\\_to\\_Centralized\\_Case\\_Mgmt\\_Ops.pdf](http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/Ltr_to_Centralized_Case_Mgmt_Ops.pdf)

## Black Women and Body Image: A Reflection



by Tigress Osborn

Back in the early days of my size acceptance journey, I was a graduate student in creative writing. I began to develop an article about black women and body image as an assignment for a journalism class. I picked a lot of classmates' brains, but over fifteen years later, two comments stick with me as issues still

faced by African-American women when it comes to size acceptance and body positivity.

The first was from a stunningly beautiful and very thin poetess who shared with me that throughout her coming of age, she was told that she was "not a real black woman" because she didn't have curvy hips and a big booty.

The second was from one of my favorite editing partners, a lovely white woman with a very curvy figure, who responded to my subject with her own story of finally learning to love her body because of the messages she got from black people. "You know, Tigress," she said. "You really just have to give it up that this is the one area of life where black women have it easier than white women."

Both comments speak to the idea that the black community has different body image standards than mainstream America. Different, I agree with. Easier? That depends. Black community body ideals are not static, and are affected by many factors, just as mainstream ideals are. For example, as a mixed black girl growing up in the era of Sir Mix-a-Lot's "Baby Got Back," the message was clear to me about what an ideal black woman's body was: "little in the middle but she got much back." There are pros and cons to the song, and a fuller analysis would take more space than I have for this piece, but I am focusing here on what it meant to me as a reminder that I did not and never have matched what is often seen as the body beauty standard of Black America (especially, but not exclusively, for those of us who grew up on hip hop). I've never been little in the middle. Never. And "much back" is a subjective measurement, and one by which I have often been found lacking. The song juxtaposes a black ideal with a white ideal. But I didn't meet any of those ideals; I wasn't Jane Fonda *or* Flo Jo.

Both of the women who commented on my graduate project would be found lacking by this standard, too, but only one of them would have also been told that it meant she was a failure both as a woman and as a representative of her race. This is precisely why the idea that black women have it easier is an oversimplification of the black community's "more accepting" body ideals. Black women are subjected to both the mainstream standard *and* the standard of the black community, however those may differ from each other. Additionally, when we get beyond personal issues like self-acceptance and feeling beautiful, and we start to talk about civil rights issues related to fatness, blackness does not protect African-American women from healthcare mistreatment, underemployment, unfair pay, and other serious size discrimination issues. This is especially true in places where black women are socially and economically required to survive integrated

spaces. The reality is that the intersection of racism and fatphobia sometimes mean black women face even more challenges.

Understanding that there are differences between how white women and black women experience body politics is essential to building an inclusive body love movement. (The same is true for other women of color and for people of all gender identities, but I have focused on Black cisgender women because this is a reflection based largely on personal experience). What I learned from my two classmates was important; part of what I hope they learned from me is that we still need to consider issues of privilege when talking about body image and size acceptance. Thin black women have privilege fat black women don't; white women of all sizes have privilege black women don't. When we talk about these differences rather than pretending we're all facing the same struggles, we are better allies to each other.

## Taking Action as a Result of Injury at Texas State Fair

*by Jessica Shaw*

In October 2014, I was injured on a ride at the State Fair of Texas. The ride is called the rocket. It starts off spinning, then it rocks while spinning, then it sends you upside down, while spinning. I know what you're thinking . . . why did you ride this crazy thing? My fifteen year old son Dalton really wanted me to ride with him so, although I was nervous, I decided to be part of his happiness.

Feeling unsure, I asked others if I should ride this ride. Everyone was sure that it would be okay. Seems much older people ride it and are fine. Being that we were at the State Fair of Texas, I felt safe and sure that if for some reason there may be a chance of me being injured, they would not allow me to ride. As we got into the seats, an employee came around to latch the harness. He had trouble latching mine. I tried to talk him into letting me off because obviously, I was too big for the harness, but he said "suck it in" and pushed hard for the last time and it latched.

I was in trouble. I couldn't breathe as he rushed off. I tried to keep breathing, scared that the latch would come open. This was the most awful experience of my life. When the ride ended, I was very relieved to be released from the harness. As my family and I walked away, I started to feel flu like symptoms and told my husband I needed to go home. The next week was horrible. I felt faint if I tried to stand up.

Internal pain and a strange humming in my ears finally sent me to the emergency room and my family doctor for MRIs and x-rays. My doctor informed me that I had serious injuries and sent me to a spine specialist. I have two slipped disks, a torn rotator cuff, bruising and tissue density in my breasts, disks number 4 and 6 are completely locked up, and there is nerve damage.

Since then, my family and I have been struggling. Being a heavy person, these injuries are even more painful and my quality of life has suffered. I have been through physical therapy, and visited chiropractors trying to get relief from the pain but chiropractors will not touch my neck due to the seriousness of the injuries. I do not believe in pain pills or narcotics so drugs are out of the question.

The negligence of the employee and the State Fair caused me to be disabled at the age of 38. Now it is up to me to make sure that this does not happen to anyone else. I have filed a proposal to the legislature for 2017, to help secure the safety of larger patrons at amusement parks and fairs in the state of Texas. I want test seating to be placed at the entrance of amusement parks and such places. All people deserve to be protected from harm at events where family fun is the main goal.

## Looking for Personal Stories for New Toolkit

Are you attending, have recently attended or are you a faculty member at a college or university and found that there are problems with accessibility? Have you been discriminated against due to your body size? If so, we would like to hear about your experiences. NAAFA is developing a Size Diversity in Higher Education Toolkit and is looking to include these stories as examples of what needs to be improved to make the educational experience more welcoming to fat bodies. If you are interested in your story's possible inclusion in the toolkit, please respond by going to

[http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/get\\_involved/share\\_your\\_story.html](http://www.naafaonline.com/dev2/get_involved/share_your_story.html)



Your submission, if included in the toolkit, would be noted with your first name and last initial. Any reference to a specific school would be removed. Thank you for your help in making this new educational tool effective and relevant to your needs.

## Personal Training Party!



by Cinder Ernst

Hello NAAFA Friends.

This month I am offering a free training instead of information. If you miss the regular article format you can find it in my newsletter here:

<http://www.mcssl.com/mail/view/9F33C9E2A1F84B6AB803A660F7B856DA>

I want to try something new; will you help me?

Let's have A *Virtual Personal Training Party*. This is for you if:

- You have knee, hip or back pain
- You're wanting to improve mobility and/or energy

Six of us will get together on Skype or on the phone.

Each person will fill out a questionnaire before the training so that I am well prepared. Everyone

will receive a custom strength building system. Everyone will learn my sweet and easy self-motivation system so you can successfully implement your system.

We will have FUN! May be hard to believe, fun and fitness in the same sentence, LOL.

I'm planning on charging \$97 for this in the future but would like to do a practice run, and would love your help! How about Sunday, March 6, 2016, noon PST! Email me at [coach@cinderernst.com](mailto:coach@cinderernst.com) to reserve your spot.

## Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[Check <http://naafa.org> and <http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/naafanews/conversations/topics> for the latest news.]

June 26, 2015: Researchers find that weight loss interventions that target the physical environment and access as well as health behavior for the entire population (rather than just fat people) have the least potential for ethical concerns.

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs13679-015-0166-7>

November 1, 2015: A 67-year follow-up study finds no apparent association between childhood body weight and later morbidity from cardiovascular disease

and cancer.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26443418>

November 28, 2015: A study of long-bone strength in men of various ages and sizes finds that older men with increased BMI are less susceptible to fractures of the femur, due to a thicker femoral neck.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26385008>

January 8, 2016: A Danish study of gastric bypass patients finds nearly 90% experienced at least one adverse event in the years following the surgery, with 29% of the patients requiring hospitalization.

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/Endocrinology/Obesity/55570>

<http://archsurg.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2479435>

January 12, 2016: Five organizations under the name "Obesity Care Coalition", representing the weight loss surgery (WLS) industry and not patients, filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services claiming that denial of insurance coverage for WLS is discriminatory and in violation of the Affordable Healthcare Act.

<http://www.generalsurgerynews.com/In-the-News/Article/01-16/Group-Files-Bariatric-Surgery-Denial-Complaint/34815>

<http://www.generalsurgerynews.com/In-the-News/Article/01-16/Group-Files-Bariatric-Surgery-Denial-Complaint/34815>

January 13, 2016: A study of undergraduate female students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) finds that 44% are subjected to teasing and body shaming about their weight, and that those women are much more likely to develop eating disorder symptoms.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195666316300186>

<http://www.thenational.ae/uae/health/more-emirati-students-being-bullied-about-their-weight-research-shows>

January 18, 2016: Espousing a HAES approach, Marsha Hudnall, MS, RDN, CD, sees the concept of "healthy weight" as your natural weight, not achieved through restrictive eating or excessive exercising, and therefore an outcome rather than a goal. (One might ask whether "healthy weight" is a useful concept at all, given the above.)

<http://www.fitwoman.com/blog/2016/01/18/healthy-weight-week-defining-healthy-weight-hww>

<http://www.fitwoman.com/blog/2016/01/18/healthy-weight-week-defining-healthy-weight-hww>

January 18, 2016: Judith Matz provides 8 responses to diet talk, including how to explain why you do not want to hear or participate in the conversation and ways friends can be supportive without talking about diets.

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/01/dont-want-hear-about-your-diet>

January 21, 2016: This ad about prediabetes shows that all human beings can be at risk for it, not just fat people. While the snarky tone is annoying to some, we've certainly seen worse ads.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYSzAAM1BX8>

January 24, 2016: Johnson & Johnson, Vitality Group, and some pharmaceutical companies are trying to use false data and shoddy studies to sell companies on a justification for even more job discrimination for fat people as a means to sell "wellness" programs.

<http://theysaidwhat.net/2016/01/24/overweight-johnson-johnsons-dream-is-your-worst-nightmare>

<http://theysaidwhat.net/2016/01/24/overweight-johnson-johnsons-dream-is-your-worst-nightmare>

January 24, 2016: Melissa A. Fabello and Linda Bacon thoroughly explain why concern-trolling fat people is not helpful and is essentially just another way to shame and perpetuate stereotypes about fat people.

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2016/01/concern-trolling-is-bullshit>

January 25, 2016: Patients with type 2 diabetes who intentionally lost weight had no associated reduction in all-cause mortality or cardiovascular morbidity/mortality. In fact, weight loss (regardless of intention) was an independent risk factor for increased all-cause mortality.

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0146889>

January 28, 2016: A study of genetically identical mice and human twins finds that how a gene is expressed is related to whether a mouse or human twin is fat. Obese mice in the study have impaired expression of epigenetically regulated "imprinted" genes, which alter growth and body weight.

<http://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-epigenetics-weight-differences-identical-twins.html>

<https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/253164>

January 28, 2016: The reactions of young girls to the new "curvy" Barbie doll (giggling about how "fat" she is) show that we have a long way to go in instilling fat acceptance in our children.

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx\\_factor/2016/01/28/little\\_girls\\_reactions\\_to\\_curvy\\_barbie\\_prove\\_why\\_we\\_need\\_curvy\\_barbie.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2016/01/28/little_girls_reactions_to_curvy_barbie_prove_why_we_need_curvy_barbie.html)

January 29, 2016: Our own Peggy Howell discusses how parents pass on their fat phobia and bias to their children, and urges parents to focus on their child's health and character rather than size.

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/patient-advice/articles/2016-01-29/mommy-am-i-fat>

February 2016: Dr. Maria Paredes offers 10 guidelines for creating and maintaining a healthy and loving relationship with your body by treating that relationship just as you would your relationship with people you love and care about.

<http://bodypoliticswithdrparedes.blogspot.com/2016/02/saying-i-do-to-your-body.html>

February 1, 2016: A study on how media coverage affects perceptions finds that simply reporting on studies that people can be fat and healthy is not enough to reduce prejudice; a more radical fat rights approach is needed.

<http://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-02-team-publishes-media-perceptions-obesity.html>

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953615302902>

February 4, 2016: Researchers at UCLA find that using BMI (body mass index) as the main indicator of health resulted in the misclassification of over 54,000,000 Americans who, despite having higher BMI, are metabolically healthy by more direct measures. The researchers also find that 30% of "normal" weight individuals are metabolically unhealthy.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/02/160204042240.htm>

<http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-bmi-does-not-measure-health-20160204-story.html>

<http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/vaop/naam/abs/ijo201617a.html>

February 7, 2016: Novelist Sarai Walker talks about the difficulties of touring as a fat woman promoting her novel Dietland, which featuring a fat female character who learns to love her body without losing weight.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/07/opinion/sunday/yes-im-fat-its-ok-i-said-it.html>

February 8, 2016: A video of the amazing Dana Falsetti, a fat yoga instructor, demonstrates that yoga is not just for thin people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQSKfZkAVro>

*Founded in 1969, NAAFA, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance, is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.*

On the web: <http://www.naafa.org>

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