

MIFITNEWS



Michigan Fitness Association

Summer 2024

ANTI-OBESITY MEDICATIONS

AND THE FITNESS
INDUSTRY

PLUS:
THE 4 HORSEMEN
OF LEADERSHIP

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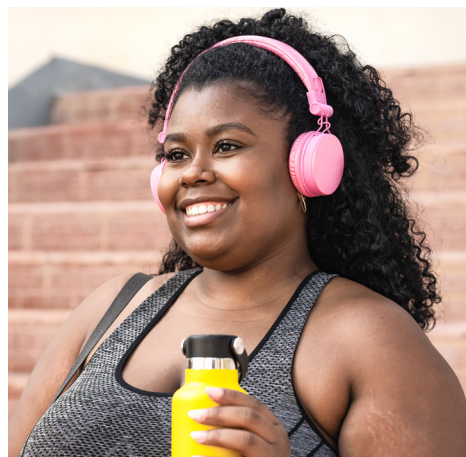


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Cover photo courtesy of Planet Fitness



MICHAEL E. STACK, BS,
ACSM-EP, ACSM-EIM,
ACSM-PAPHS, CSCS
 MFA SECRETARY
 EDUCATION COMMITTEE CHAIR

I'd like to start by welcoming you to the inaugural issue of MiFitNews, the official quarterly e-magazine of the Michigan Fitness Association (MFA). As the trade association representing the health and fitness industry in Michigan, the MFA is focused on uniting, protecting, and promoting the interests of health and fitness businesses in the state. We aim to vigorously advocate for, educate, and empower fitness professionals to ensure we are recognized as an essential provider in the healthcare delivery system.

While the MFA was formed during the COVID-19 pandemic in an effort to assist in getting health and fitness clubs reopened, we've now evolved into a strong advocacy organization for the industry in the state. As the opening paragraph attests, the MFA is deeply committed to elevating the industry to its rightful place within the healthcare delivery system. The MFA can accomplish this in several ways.

Foundationally, a unified industry, advocating with one voice for policy and system change that supports our industry is critically important. This is why MFA membership is critical to elevating our industry. Beyond that, our industry becoming more educated on topics that are relevant to the elevation of our profession is equally critical. The MFA seeks to provide this education through several mediums.

Our annual conference and monthly *FitByte* newsletters are two pillars through which we'll deliver education. This quarterly e-magazine is the third pillar. It will be delivered directly to your inbox each quarter to keep you informed on the most relevant, cutting-edge, and engaging information you need to keep your business and your local community as healthy as possible.

This first issue has some exciting content. Here are some of the highlights:

- The MFA's lobbyist, Jim Ryan from Public Affairs Associates, will highlight topics from the legislative meetings MFA Board of Directors members had with lawmakers, in Lansing, in May.
- The MFA's marketing firm, CR Marketing, will provide some important insights on current marketing trends in the health and fitness industry for you to consider.
- MFA Board President, Bryan Rief from Epic Fitness Group (the largest Planet Fitness franchisee in the state) will provide a Board Report to update you on what the MFA Board of Directors is currently focused on.
- MFA member, Kemper Sosa, will provide an interesting perspective on leadership and management in his article entitled, *[Insert Title Here]*. You won't want to miss this opportunity to learn how to leverage leadership to empower ownership in your team in a way that has wide-reaching cultural and revenue implications.
- As the MFA's resident science expert, I tackle the feature article in this issue entitled, *The Implications of Anti-Obesity Medications for the Fitness Industry*. This article will take a deep dive into a hot topic that is upending not just the health and fitness industry, but healthcare and society as a whole. This may be the most important contemporary topic for our industry to understand and engage with. In this article, I'll not only provide an understanding of how these medications work, but also the threats and opportunities they present for the health and fitness industry.

Ultimately, the MFA is here to serve you, your business, and your employees. If there are educational topics you'd like to learn more about in the future, please reach out and let us know. Enjoy the inaugural issue of MiFitNews and I hope to see you at our annual conference on 10/17/24 at Hype Athletics in Wayne, Michigan. 📍



YOUR MEMBER BENEFITS

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PARTNERS IN BENEFITS

MFA MEMBERS* ARE JOINT MEMBERS
OF THE SMALL BUSINESS
ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN. WITH
THAT MEMBERSHIP COMES THE
ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THESE
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*Current direct members of SBAM who are also members of
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- SBAM Advocacy & Grassroots Network
- Access to online resources



BRYAN RIEF
MFA PRESIDENT

As we move through this quarter, I am excited to share with you the latest initiatives and projects that the board has been diligently working on to promote the fitness industry across our great state. Our mission to unite, protect, and promote the interests of health and fitness businesses in Michigan remains as strong as ever, and we have several key updates that underscore our commitment to this cause.

ADVANCING ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Advocacy remains a cornerstone of our efforts. We have been actively engaging with state legislators to promote policies that support our industry and to limit legislation that has the potential to harm us. Among those, the MFA is monitoring and lobbying against any bills that would amend the Michigan Consumer Protection Act for contracts that renew automatically, commonly referred to as “Auto Renewal” legislation.

HEALTH & WELLNESS ENHANCEMENT GRANTS

The MFA was thrilled to complete the Round 1 of the MFA Health and Wellness Enhancement Grants to qualified fitness businesses. The grant is from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) for Michigan-based fitness businesses to promote health and wellness in their communities. We distributed over \$4 million but we are not done yet. Stay tuned for Round 2 of the MFA Health & Wellness Enhancement Grants which we plan to announce this fall.

1ST ANNUAL MICHIGAN FITNESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Plan now to join us for this collaborative and informative networking event. Benefit from our government affairs and legislative updates, hear from industry experts on best practices for running your business, get connected to top industry resources and more. Mark your calendar for October 17, 2024. Registration is now open, see pages 7-9 for details.

In closing, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your continued support and dedication to the Michigan Fitness Association. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of countless individuals and building a healthier, more active Michigan. I encourage you to stay engaged, share your ideas, and participate in our upcoming events and initiatives. 🍷



Conference Information

STRONGER *together*

MICHIGAN FITNESS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 17, 2024

HYPE WAYNE | WAYNE, MICHIGAN

STRONGER *together*

We are excited to announce the first-ever Michigan Fitness Association Annual Conference! Plan now to join us for this collaborative and informative networking event. Gym owners and operators from across the State of Michigan will attend this conference to benefit from government affairs and legislative updates, hear from industry experts on best practices and get connected with resources to help your business.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

REGISTRATION

Registration fees include all educational sessions as well as meals and refreshment breaks throughout the conference. To register, visit the events page at mfafit.org or scan the QR code.



Early registration ends October 3, 2024. After October 3, an additional \$25 will be added to all registration fees.

MFA Member	\$99
Non-Member	\$149

CONTINUING EDUCATION

More information coming soon.

ATTIRE

The suggested dress is business or business casual.

LOCATION

HYPE Athletics Western Wayne
4635 Howe Rd.
Wayne, MI 48184

SCHEDULE

8:00am-8:30am

Continental Breakfast, Registration & Visit Exhibits

8:30am-9:00am

Michigan Fitness Association Welcomes You

Welcome to the first-ever Michigan Fitness Association Annual Conference, a soon to be yearly tradition for our members. Meet the MFA Board, learn more about what your membership has to offer, hear what we've been up to, and what you can look forward to.

9:00am-10:30am

The Importance of Advocacy for the Health & Fitness Industry

Jim Ryan, Lobbyist, Michigan Fitness Association and Michael Stack, ACSM-EP, CSCS, CEO, Applied Fitness Solutions

The pandemic underscored the vulnerability of the fitness industry, spurring a shift from defensive recovery strategies to proactive advocacy. This lecture will delve into the importance of advocacy in the fitness industry, exploring effective practices and ways fitness professionals can engage and influence.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 17, 2024

HYPE WAYNE | WAYNE, MICHIGAN

10:30am-11:00am

Break and Visit Exhibits

11:00am-12:00pm

Contemporary Approaches to Obesity Treatment: Bridging Lifestyle, Obesity Medications, and Surgery

Renee Rogers, PhD, Senior Scientist, University of Kansas Medical Center

In an era where obesity is a burgeoning global health crisis, it is imperative for fitness and exercise professionals to stay at the forefront of contemporary treatment approaches. This lecture will explore multifaceted strategies in obesity treatment, emphasizing the integration of lifestyle modifications, pharmacotherapy, and surgical interventions, while highlighting the latest research and evidence-based practices for sustainable weight loss and improved health outcomes.

12:00pm-1:00pm

Lunch

1:00pm-2:00pm

Connecting the Dots: The National Exercise Referral Framework as a Bridge Between Healthcare and Exercise Professionals

Amy Bantham, DrPH, CEO, Move to Live More and Francis Neric, MS, BMA, AVP of Certification and Credentialing, American College of Sports Medicine

Learn about the exciting work integrating exercise professionals into healthcare through the National Exercise Referral Framework, setting standards and driving evidence-based programs that align with healthcare needs. Join us to see how these efforts are empowering the fitness industry to make a substantial impact on health and wellness.

2:00pm-2:15pm

Break & Visit Exhibits

2:15pm-3:15pm

Marketing Mastery for Fitness Businesses: Strategies for Success

Delve into the essentials of search engine optimization (SEO), social media, email marketing, and more through practical, evidence-based strategies designed to boost online visibility and engagement in the fitness industry. Learn to apply these tools effectively to achieve measurable success in your fitness business.

3:15pm – 4:15pm

Roundtable Discussions

Join our dynamic round table discussions where ideas will converge, and solutions will emerge. Along with your fellow industry professionals you will explore pressing issues facing our industry today, brainstorm innovative strategies and develop actionable solutions.

4:15pm

Conclusion

Register at
mfit.org/events

THE 4 HORSEMEN OF LEADERSHIP

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES FOR FITNESS BUSINESS OWNERS



BY KEMPER SOSA
APPLIED FITNESS SOLUTIONS

In traditional business, leadership is typically identified as a position, role or set of high level responsibilities one is accountable for. Leadership training incorporates developing skills, both hard and soft, to be effective in the role. “Effective Communication”, “Relationship Building”, “Strategic Thinking” are all skillsets common to the standard leadership training curriculum. While skills training is wildly important, there’s a foundational level that needs to be addressed.

Below we’ll discuss key core principles (The 4 Horsemen) that will transcend you from a mere fitness business operator to a true leader of people. Mastering the embodiment of these principles is foundational for the impact desired on your business, relationships and life.

IDENTITY

In this phase, leadership is less about acquiring skill sets and more about embodying specific principles. It’s a profound shift from doing to being. This state of being is constant, unable to be turned off or “left at the studio.” Before we dive into those principles, understand that the intention isn’t to learn a set of skills, but to truly transcend who we are at our core.

This identity shift is crucial because your impact as a leader is limited if you do not personally align with the values and behaviors we’ll dive into below. When we make this shift, leading becomes intuitive and authentic, rather than a set of actions to be performed. It’s about living the principles of leadership so deeply that they naturally guide your behavior and decisions, creating a seamless blend between personal and professional life.

For leaders in the fitness industry, this concept of identity is especially relevant. Fitness professionals often emphasize the importance of consistency and commitment in achieving goals. Similarly, the journey to becoming an effective leader requires

a consistent and committed approach to embodying these core principles. This embodiment means your leadership traits are evident in every interaction, whether with members, team members, or in personal relationships. The age-old saying “how you do anything is how you do everything,” couldn’t be more true.

Let’s dive in more about what these key leadership principles are and how we can go about acquiring them as part of our *new* identity.

THE 4 HORSEMEN

#1. Emotional Intelligence (EQ): Simply put, this is our ability to acknowledge, understand and effectively manage our emotions along with recognizing, understanding and influencing the emotional state of others. The people we lead may have events and issues going on in their personal lives we have no knowledge of. More times than not, there are things in their life that are far more important to them than a smooth rollout of the new program we’re implementing organizationally. Meeting your team with empathy is the key to unlock the door for a real relationship. Achieving heightened levels of EQ allows for empathy to show up more often than not, ultimately allowing you to connect more deeply with the people who matter most.^{1,6}

Signs of mastery here include:

- People feel safe enough to be vulnerable around you.
- Emotional regulation of the self.
- Higher levels of empathy and compassion.
- Relationships evolving more deeply.
- Diffusing difficult conversations/situations.
- Genuine inquiry of others’ well being.
- Positively reframing challenging events.

#2. Service: This is commonly mistaken as “doing things” for others to be nice or to be liked. While serving is a nice thing to do, it is not for the sole reason of unloading responsibility from others. In fact, that alone can be detrimental towards one’s development. Service to others is compassionately supporting them towards their best version of them. What’s interesting is that we are unable to uncover that without mastering the first principle of EQ. Sometimes, service can be filled with positive emotions and a celebratory feeling. Other times, it shows up

as a difficult accountability conversation. Regardless of if the person we're serving feels happy or sad, our duty is to the best version of themselves.

Servant oriented leadership flips traditional leadership on its head. This concept of leadership referenced in [“Leaders Eat Last”](#) - Sinek and Zingerman's philosophy of [Stewardship](#), states that leadership is a bottom up approach vs. a top down, empowering and uplifting others as opposed to commanding authoritatively. The greatest act of service you can give to your people is- your time. This time must extend beyond that annual performance review, the quarterly audits and the company bbq. Truly serving your people is being alongside them physically and emotionally, unconditionally. In my fitness business, we close the facility down from 1pm-3pm intentionally. This is our unstructured time for my team members and I to workout together. During this time is when the highest quality connections are made. It's when I get to *see* them, agenda-less, and truly understand how I can best serve them in their current state. Structuring *unstructured* time with your

people will ultimately serve your business.^{2,4}

#3. Influence: Influence, also known as communicating directly to that “best version” declared by the person(s) you're engaging with. At its core, influence is about creating a connection between individual motivations and organizational goals. Every person on your team has unique drives and aspirations. They have beliefs and goals that matter most to them. Effective leaders understand these personal motivations and align them with the larger vision of the organization. This alignment creates a powerful synergy, where personal and organizational goals become intertwined, fostering a sense of shared purpose⁴.

Influence begins with genuine curiosity. To influence others, leaders must first understand them deeply. This involves asking insightful questions:

- **Who is this person?** Understanding the individual's background, experiences, and identity.
- **What are their experiences?** Gaining insights into their journey, challenges, and triumphs.



- **What drives them?** Identifying their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.
- **What excites them?** Recognizing their passions and interests.
- **How can I help them achieve their best?** Finding ways to support their growth and development.
- **How do I connect their wants with the organization's needs?** Bridging personal goals with organizational objectives.

By knowing these answers and communicating why it matters, leaders can create a meaningful connection with each team member, fostering trust and respect. Once team members feel understood, valued and connected with, they're more energized to buy into the collective vision. This shared meaning creates the intrinsic and infinite human energy source. Again, these conversations can exist outside of a formal development meeting. In my experience, more meaningful connection takes place when they are.³

#4. Accountability: Accountability is arguably one of the highest expressions of love in an organization. Like love, it can be selfless, painful at times yet reinforcing of the relationship. When holding ourselves, or others, accountable to the things we declare is the most caring thing we can do. Accountability is like the “vegetables” of leadership—essential, but not always the most appealing.

First and foremost, if you the leader has not made the identify shift, accountability starts there. Leaders must first hold themselves accountable, setting an example for their team. This means consistently aligning actions with values and goals, being transparent about mistakes, and demonstrating a commitment to personal growth, even when you “clock out” for the day.

Successfully nurturing the first 3 principles, we now have a strong foundation to hold others accountable. Holding others accountable to what *they* say they want is much more powerful than holding them accountable to standards they don't align with. If you have the right people on your team, you will always be holding them accountable to *their* standard, which is in turn *our* standard.⁵

CONCLUSION

Being a leader is an authentic shift from “a role to perform” to an embodiment of the principles above. These principles aren't theoretical concepts to be turned on and off; they are integral traits that define who we are. By making this identity shift and mastering the 4 horsemen principles, we can create a powerful and positive impact on our business, our team and our members.

So, as you step forward in your leadership journey, embrace these principles wholeheartedly, and watch as your influence transforms your business into a thriving, cohesive, and impactful force. 🐾

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As Co-Owner of Applied Fitness Solutions, Kemper is supremely passionate about people. He brings his love for the members, his deep appreciation for his team, and his unending passion for life to every interaction and is truly dedicated to cultivating positive and supportive relationships.

Kemper graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a B.S. in Exercise Science and a Minor in Human Nutrition. Kemper also holds the American College of Sports Medicine Certified Personal Trainer Credential, Exercise Physiologist Credential, and the National Strength and Conditioning Association Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist Certification.

To take a deeper look under the hood of Kemper, visit his blog, *Transcending Transaction*, for his insights on relationships, leadership and business. He can be contacted at kemper@4afsfitt.com

“MEMBER’S ONLY” RESOURCE-PORTAL SIGN UP TODAY



BY ELLA CUMPATA
CR MARKETING

MFA members can access cutting-edge marketing resources to help fitness and wellness centers reach more customers on social media and websites. This member-only marketing information will help boost your website, social

media, and blog reach.

An email was sent to your inbox (check spam folder too) on Friday, July 26, 2024. Follow the directions in the email to access the members-only site.

“This MFA members-only site will add new resources each month,” said MFA’s executive director Derek Dalling. “The site also has links to our association’s marketing team if you need advice on implementing the association’s Michigan-based SEO and social media content.”



If you did not receive an email or need assistance logging in, please email our marketing team at CR@CRmarketing.biz. In the subject line, put “Help, Ella!”

NEW GRANT ANNOUNCED FROM SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) has introduced the Small Business Support Hub (SBSH) Grant Program - comprehensive courses, resources, and events tailored to support established small business owners that were negatively impacted by the pandemic.

This SBSH Grant Program is designed to provide support for established 1st stage and 2nd stage businesses who have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Though this grant program is not administered by the MFA, as a MFA member, you are eligible to apply. The MFA encourages all members to take a look at this opportunity.

Qualifying as a participant in the SBSH Grant Program is relatively easy. You do not need to be a member of the Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) or any organization to qualify. Simply tell us a little about your business and SBAM will handle the rest. You will NOT be asked to submit such personal information as business financial reports, personal financial statements, or previous years’ tax returns. Once you complete the application the SBAM Foundation team will review your application and determine if you qualify to participate.



WATCH THIS SHORT VIDEO TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT THIS EXCITING OPPORTUNITY

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE & APPLY TODAY](#)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANTI-OBESITY MEDICATIONS FOR THE FITNESS INDUSTRY



BY MICHAEL E. STACK, BS, ACSM-EP, ACSM-EIM, ACSM-PAPHS, CSCS
APPLIED FITNESS SOLUTIONS

For decades fitness industry professionals have scoffed at the idea of “weight loss pills.” We’ve called them fake and fraudulent, noting they’re not a substitute for diet, exercise,

discipline, and willpower. Up until recently, these industry professionals would be correct; these pills were frauds and it really did require diet, exercise, and as much discipline and willpower as someone could muster to lose weight.

This is no longer the case as clinically vetted Anti-Obesity Medications (AOMs) have taken the obesity medicine space by storm, seemingly overnight. AOMs will have huge implications for not only the treatment of obesity, but also for the fitness industry. In this article, we’ll unpack the science behind AOMs as well as their efficacy in treating obesity. Most importantly, we’ll dive into implications, opportunities, and the challenges of these medications for the fitness industry.

HOW AOMs WORK

Understanding the underlying mechanisms for AOMs is an important starting point, as it sheds light on what is often referred to as the neurobiological basis for obesity. The success of AOMs in treating obesity is due how they influence the brain’s regulation of energy. Although we often think of regulation of energy, or hunger/fullness, as under our voluntary control it really isn’t. Like most biological processes, the ones that are the most critical are regulated largely on a subconscious level by the brain. The part of the brain that controls energy regulation through hunger and fullness is the hypothalamus. It receives signals from several hormones that increase or decrease the drive to eat, and like most hormones in the body, they’re paired with a counterbalancing effect.

Leptin is our body’s satiety/fullness hormone, it’s produced in our fat cells. Ghrelin on the other hand is our hunger hormone, it’s produced in our stomach. After we’ve eaten, when food is in the stomach, ghrelin goes down sending signals to the brain

that we’re full. Likewise, two other important pancreatic hormones affect hunger, these hormones are insulin and glucagon. Insulin stores nutrients in our cells after we’ve eaten. Glucagon does the reverse, in times of low energy availability (if we haven’t eaten in a while) it releases energy from our cells.

Now that you understand how energy is regulated, you can understand how AOMs work. The primary AOMs on the market right now are glucagon-like peptide 1 agonists (or GLP-1s). When GLP-1s act on the pancreas, they increase insulin production and decrease glucagon production. This sends a signal to the brain that the body is in a “fed” state. Likewise, GLP-1 drugs slow digestion, leaving food in the stomach longer, thereby reducing the hunger hormone ghrelin. The net effect of this is significantly reduced hunger.

This brings us back to neurobiological basis for obesity. For years the supposition was that obesity was merely a lack of willpower or discipline. AOMs directly challenge this notion given they reduce hunger and energy intake on a subconscious level. What research has shown is that individuals with obesity perceive hunger differently than normal weight individuals¹. Essentially, AOMs level the neurobiological playing field and allow for appropriate energy intake in individuals with obesity.

Thus far, the most widely used AOM for the treatment of obesity, Wegovy (or the GLP-1 agonist, semaglutide) has demonstrated upwards of 15% total body weight loss in users. Next generation AOMs that work on additional mechanisms are demonstrating even additional weight loss, approaching 20% of total body weight. Research does show not everyone loses that amount of weight, and there are certain individuals who are non-responders, but as a whole, AOMs seem to be broadly effective at driving weight loss.

SIDE EFFECTS OF AOMs

Like any medication, the AOMs do have some side effects. The common side effects are as follows:

- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES OF ANTI-OBESITY MEDICATIONS

- Constipation
- Dizziness
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Fatigue

As you can see, many of these side effects are digestive system related. This makes sense given how the AOMs slow the digestive process. Fatigue, dizziness, and headaches also make sense given that AOMs reduce overall calorie intake. More severe side effects around muscle wasting and suicidal thoughts have largely been disproven.²³ In fact, research suggests that muscle loss and suicidal thoughts maybe less likely when taking the AOMs.

I think it's important to drill down on the so-called "muscle loss" side effect to gain a more nuanced understanding. Whenever someone loses large amounts of weight, they lose a significant amount of lean tissue. Some research suggests that lean mass lost can be upwards of 45-50% of weight lost. Keep in mind only a portion of this lean tissue is muscle, the rest is other non-muscle lean tissues that aren't necessary when overall body weight is lost. In keeping with that thought, when someone loses a significant amount of weight, they also need less muscle tissue, as they're simply carrying around less overall mass.

What is currently not clear with the AOMs is how much actual muscle tissue is being lost. That research is currently underway. What does seem clear is the amount of muscle tissue lost isn't any more than what is lost through non-AOM weight loss interventions.⁴

Likely the biggest side effect of the AOMs, at least at this point, is their cost and their lifetime use requirement. Right now, most AOMs cost between \$1000-\$1500/month and insurance coverage is

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Previously, weight loss pills were deemed fraudulent, with diet and exercise as the only valid weight loss methods.



INTRODUCTION OF AOMs

Clinically vetted AOMs like GLP-1 agonists are now effective in treating obesity.



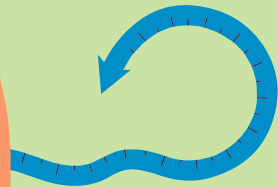
MECHANISM

AOMs influence the brain's regulation of hunger via hormones like leptin, ghrelin, insulin, and glucagon, reducing hunger and energy intake.



EFFICACY

AOMs like semaglutide have shown significant weight loss (15-20% body weight).



SIDE EFFECTS

Common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, and headaches. Muscle loss concerns are being studied.



COST AND LIFELONG USE

High cost and the need for lifelong use are major challenges.



FITNESS INDUSTRY IMPACT

Challenges include shifting the paradigm as exercise is no longer the primary weight loss method. Opportunities arise in promoting the broader benefits of exercise and welcoming a new market of AOM users.



FUTURE OUTLOOK

Embracing AOMs can lead to significant industry growth and improved public health.

minimal for the AOMs. Although costs are likely to come down over time, and insurance coverage will start to become more common, right now many individuals pay out of pocket for AOMs. This cost factor is compounded by the fact that these medications require lifetime use to maintain their therapeutic effect of hunger reduction, energy restriction, and weight loss. Indeed, individuals who come off these medications reestablish hunger levels and energy intake consistent with a pre-medicated state. In doing so, these individuals regain most, if not all, of their lost weight.⁵

It's important to note, I don't consider lifetime use a side effect in and of itself. It is only in the context of the high cost that ends up becoming a financial side effect. Many medications for disease states (i.e., hypertension, depression, diabetes, etc.) require lifelong use. Given obesity's neurobiological basis, discussed earlier, it's not surprising these medications would require a lifetime of use.

WEIGHT LOSS & HEALTH

One foundational discussion that needs to be unpacked is the role of weight loss in overall health. There is a general perception among fitness professionals (as well as medical professionals and the general public) that losing weight helps improve overall health. While this can be true in certain cases, it's not always true.

The research is pretty clear that individuals with a body mass index (BMI) of > 30 (which is classified as obese) can improve their health by losing weight, ideally to achieve a BMI of < 25 - 30 .⁶ That being said, when you start to get to below a 30 BMI the correlations between weight and health start to become a little fuzzy. One thing is clear, someone can be healthier at any size/BMI if they engage in healthy lifestyle behaviors such as

physical activity, healthy eating, good sleep, and appropriate stress/substance management.⁷

Based on this evidence, the AOMs are only approved for use for individuals who cannot lose weight with standard lifestyle modification who have a BMI > 30 with no obesity-related diseases (like hypertension, diabetes, etc.) or a BMI of > 27 with one or more obesity-related disease. Indeed, AOMs are not for "getting the last five pounds off," or "getting your beach bod."

CHALLENGES AOMs PRESENT FOR THE HEALTH & FITNESS INDUSTRY

By this point in the article, I think some of the challenges are becoming clear, but I'll lay them out below for clarity's sake:

Challenge #1: People lose weight on these medications without exercise. Since nearly the health and fitness industry's inception, we have promoted exercise as a way to lose weight for those who are overweight and obese. While the research on weight loss suggests it is fairly modest (at best), resulting in 3-5% body weight lost, it was something we could hang our hat on.⁸ Now individuals who take AOMs will not have to exercise to lose weight (although that doesn't mean exercise is irrelevant - see opportunities below).

Challenge #2: People will get healthier taking these medications without exercise. Not only do the AOMs treat obesity, but they're also approved to treat diabetes and cardiovascular disease right now. Other emerging research suggests they could be effective at treating liver disease, depression, sleep disorders, addiction, and a whole host of medical conditions.⁹

Given those two challenges, like it or not, we need to start changing our paradigm as an industry in light of the AOMs. No longer can we tout diet and exercise as broadly the most effective

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tive methodology for weight loss, because that simply isn't true.

OPPORTUNITIES AOMs PRESENT FOR THE HEALTH & FITNESS INDUSTRY

Looking at things from a glass half-full perspective, I think the AOMs will result in a brighter future for the health/fitness industry, based on several factors. This is a bit more of nuanced discussion than the challenges, so I'll lay it out in a more narrative form.

For starters, the fitness industry for decades has largely catered to the already fit and healthy. Individuals who are overweight or obese simply haven't felt comfortable in health and fitness clubs. Sure, maybe they've signed up and came a few times, but after that, they leave. Industry market share has never really surpassed 15-20% of the American public. While there are many reasons individuals who are overweight or obese don't tend to engage with our industry, there are a couple of likely culprits the AOMs will address.

First, going back to the neurobiological basis we started this

article by discussing, most individuals with obesity struggle with a psychological bandwidth challenge. Put simply, a lot of their mental energy goes towards things that are food related, this is referred to in research as "food noise."¹⁰ The research on AOMs suggest that when taking the medications, psychological bandwidth is freed up and food noise decreases.¹¹ With this extra mental energy, these individuals can start to focus on other health behaviors, one of which could be exercise.

Next, obesity can result in movement challenges. From joint aches and pains to more formal orthopedic issues (such as arthritis, lower back pathology, etc.) research suggests that moving in a larger body can be (at best) uncomfortable and (at worst) painful and injurious.¹² After an individual with obesity loses > 15% of their body weight on an AOM, it is highly likely movement will be much more comfortable.

Along with the increased ability to move in a more pain-free way, significant weight loss can improve confidence, self-esteem, and other psychosocial factors that may increase the



likelihood of coming to a health and fitness club.

Possibly the greatest opportunity the AOMs present for our industry is to promote and focus on the myriad of benefits you can derive from exercise, rather than just the narrow benefit of (minimal) weight loss.

To hammer home this point, below is a list of the benefits of exercise. While I realize this is preaching to the choir, it's still important to note:

- Improves CV Health
- Weight Management
- Enhances Aerobic Fitness
- Boosts Endurance
- Improves Joint Flexibility
- Reduces Risk of Chronic Diseases
- Improves Mental Health
- Enhances Brain Health
- Promotes Better Sleep
- Boosts Immune System
- Increases Lifespan
- Enhances Bone Density
- Better Balance & Coordination
- Increases Energy Levels
- Enhances Mood
- Improves Skin Health
- Relaxation and Stress Relief
- Promotes a Better Sex Life
- Improves Cognitive Function
- Social Interaction

The good news is, only a handful of these benefits can be derived from AOMs.

I think what's more important for the health and fitness industry to consider in light of the AOMs, is we can now promote exercise for what it was truly meant for all along – to help individuals lead the life they want to live. I know that might sound abstract and sappy, but bear with me.

The American College of Sports Medicine defines physical fitness as “The ability to carry out daily tasks with vigor and alertness, without undue fatigue, and with ample energy to enjoy leisure-time pursuits and meet unforeseen emergencies.”

While this might be an academic sounding definition (because it is) its implications are clear; exercise that leads to improved physical fitness allows people to engage physically with life in all the ways they desire. To play with their kids and grandkids, to hike, bike, play a recreational sport, live long enough to see their grandkids get married, etc. Whatever life throws at you, exercising to improve physical fitness makes you harder and more resilient.

This is where the opportunity lies: as an industry, we can finally start promoting exercise for what it was meant for – leading the fulfilling life we want to live, rather than just trying to lose a few pounds.

SEIZING THE AOM OPPORTUNITY

AOMs are here and they're not going anywhere. In fact, it's highly likely they'll only get better and cheaper. They'll help people lose weight and get healthier without exercise. Ignore this reality at your own peril. Rather than thinking this is end of the health and fitness industry, it's time to accept the fact we've never been broadly effective at helping individuals with obesity lose weight and keep it off. AOMs do just that and then some.

The opportunity of AOMs for the industry is created in our ability to welcome individuals being treated for obesity into our health and fitness clubs in a way that is inviting, approachable and safe. Safe in the psychological and emotional sense, but also safe in the physical sense. Having caring professionals and staff that understand the AOMs and the individuals who are on them, opens the industry up to an entirely new market of people we've never served. Ten years from now the AOMs may be one of the biggest boons the industry has ever seen. That reality will be determined by how we approach the challenges and opportunities of the AOMs. Fortunately, the future is ours to write, and here's to hoping we seize the chance to make a lot of people, and our industry, much healthier. 🍌

Michael Stack is the founder & CEO of Applied Fitness Solutions and the Michigan Moves Coalition. He is a faculty lecturer for the University of Michigan's School of Kinesiology. He is also the creator and the host of the Wellness Paradox Podcast, produced in conjunction with University of Michigan. Michael is an exercise physiologist by training and a health entrepreneur, health educator, and fitness industry advocate by trade. He is dedicated to enhancing the standard of practice of, and advocating for, fitness and wellness professionals to ensure they become an essential constituent in the healthcare delivery system.

MFA'S DIVERGENT STRATEGY TO MOTIVATE WELLNESS AND FITNESS

The MFA's new marketing campaign motivates the public away from couches, TVs, and busy schedules. Michigan residents need the mental tools to stand up to the lazy side of their brains. "To share the gift of health and strength, we cannot just play along," said Joe Ross, an MFA Public Education Committee staff member. The association is deploying a divergent strategy that motivates residents to make time for fitness and wellness.

"Moving towards that thoughtful, divergent strategy requires relentless hard work by our marketing staff and honest idea-sharing between all MFA leaders and members, said Mike Stack, Chairman of the Education Committee.

MFA MESSAGE STRATEGY

- Use evidence-based fitness messaging that inspires behavior change.
- Messaging needs to parallel online trending fitness topics and address why fitness and wellness should be part of a person's weekly routine.
- Explain the neurological benefits of becoming fit.
- The association will engage MFA members to become drivers of health at the community level by branding their service as a driver of community health. 🏋️



MFA ENSURES THE INDUSTRY'S SEAT AT THE TABLE



BY JIM RYAN & CORTNI STORRER
PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSOCIATES



There's a saying in politics; "if you don't have a seat at the table, you're on the menu." The health and fitness industry learned that lesson the hard way during the pandemic. The Michigan Fitness Association (MFA) is committed to ensuring that never happens again.

On May 24, 2024, MFA board members Alyssa Tushman, Bryan Rief, and Michael Stack participated in an advocacy day in Lansing to solidify the industry's seat at the table. Accompanied by MFA lobbyist Jim Ryan of Public Affairs Associates, their efforts focused

on engaging with lawmakers from both political parties, emphasizing the critical role the health and fitness industry plays in enhancing Michigan's population health.

The advocacy day organized by the MFA was not just a routine gathering; it was a strategic move to highlight the potential of the health and fitness sector to contribute more significantly to

the public health framework. Tushman, Rief and Stack, conducted multiple meetings with state legislators. Their agenda centered on discussing legislative support that could aid the growth and development of the industry.

One of the primary goals of the advocacy day was to continue to shift the perception of the industry towards being a critical component of the public health infrastructure in the state. This recognition would not only elevate the professional status of individuals within the industry but also open up new avenues for integrating fitness into mainstream healthcare. By achieving this, they aim to ensure that more Michiganders can access quality fitness services, which are essential for preventing and managing chronic diseases, enhancing mental health, and promoting overall well-being.

The discussions also covered the economic benefits of strengthening the health and fitness industry. Using economic data the MFA board members elaborated on how supporting the fitness sector could lead to job creation and economic growth. The potential for fitness centers and professionals to contribute to a healthier population could also translate into reduced healthcare costs statewide, a point that resonates well with fiscal conservatives and healthcare reform advocates alike. The response from lawmakers was promising, with interest shown by both sides of the aisle. The bipartisan interest underscored a common recognition of the importance of health and fitness in public policy. This successful advocacy day marked a significant step forward for the MFA and its members in their ongoing efforts to not only grow the industry but also to position it as a cornerstone of public health strategy in Michigan.

"The opportunity to spend dedicated time with lawmakers to make the case for the very real role our industry plays in population health cannot be understated," said Stack. "As an organization, the MFA is positioning the industry to be viewed as a critical part of the public health infrastructure in the State of Michigan, and most importantly, the people in power are listening to why that's so important."

As the MFA continues to advocate for these crucial issues, the impact of their efforts is likely to be seen not just in legislative changes but also in the broader societal acknowledgment of fitness as a fundamental component of healthcare. 🏋️



L to R: Alyssa Tushman, Burn Fitness, LLC; Jim Ryan, Public Affairs Associates; Michael Stack, Applied Fitness Solutions

Music THAT MOTIVATES



BY SOPHIE DEITERS
CR MARKETING

The connection between music and movement goes beyond dancing, considering 61% of American gym-goers reportedly listen to music during their workouts.

Studies show that exercising and listening to music positively affect mood and endurance. The action happens in the limbic

system, which controls emotion, and the motor cortex, which controls movement.

Most people are not hopping on a treadmill with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 blasting through their earbuds. This is because different kinds of music tend to be more or less motivating and enjoyable depending on the type of workout.

[Click on the link below](#) to share this MFA report with your clients, which matches music genres with numerous wellness/fitness workouts. 🎧

MFA MUSIC THAT MOTIVATES





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Opinions expressed by guest writers do not necessarily reflect the views of the MFA. MFA's position on key issues will be clearly stated. MiFitNews accepts unsolicited manuscripts but reserves the right to edit due to space limitations. Editorial submissions must be typewritten and sent via email to derek@kdafirm.com.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Board of Directors Meeting.....	August 19	Zoom
Board of Directors Meeting.....	September 16	Zoom
MFA Annual Conference	October 17	Wayne, Michigan
Board of Directors Meeting.....	October 21	Zoom
Board of Directors Meeting.....	November 18	Zoom

ADVERTISING

Advertise with us to get your product or service in front of Michigan's gym owners. MiFitNews is the official magazine of the Michigan Fitness Association (MFA).

- Our quarterly publication reaches the desks nearly 250 fitness professionals throughout the state
- Our members spend millions of dollars annually on products and services relating to their wellness facilities
- Previous MFA communications have an average open rate of 76%

Tap into this highly engaged market today!

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