



American Society for Metabolic & Bariatric Surgery

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**“IT STARTS NOW” FILM AND VIDEO CONTEST
SEEKS INSPIRING STORIES ABOUT OBESITY IN AMERICA**

Winning Film or Video Awarded \$5,000 and National Premiere at ObesityWeek 2015 in Los Angeles

GAINESVILLE, FL –MAY 18, 2015 – *It Starts Now*, a nationwide competition that seeks short videos and films about obesity in America, begins today. Entries are being sought that creatively inspire, motivate and/or educate the public about issues related to obesity. Submissions will be judged on originality, creativity, direction, production value, dignity, content and thoughtfulness.

A jury-awarded grand prize of \$5,000 will be presented in Los Angeles, CA to the winner at ObesityWeek 2015, the largest international event focused on the basic science, clinical application and prevention and treatment of obesity. The second place winner receives \$3,500 and two third place winners receive \$1,500 each. Winning videos and films will premiere during ObesityWeek 2015, held Nov. 2 to Nov. 7, 2015. ***It Starts Now*** judges include those from the television and film industry, obesity and public health experts, patient advocacy and journalism. The contest is sponsored by the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS).

“We’re looking for submissions with compelling narratives that bring new perspective, insight and strong voice to the prevention and treatment of obesity, the biggest health threat facing America,” said John M. Morton, MD, MPH, president of the ASMBS and director of the Bariatric and Metabolic Inter-Disciplinary (BMI) Clinic at Stanford Health. “We are present at the creation of a new paradigm in obesity treatment- we now have options that work. We are asking you to motivate, educate and inspire us as individuals and as a country to think differently and take action against this disease that is the source of so many other diseases and has such an impact on health, longevity and quality of life. We need everyone to help. We can’t afford to not intervene.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports more than 72 million Americans have obesity and, according to the ASMBS, about 24 million have severe obesity. Individuals with a body mass index (BMI) greater than 30 have a 50 to 100 percent increased risk of premature death compared to healthy weight individuals, as well as an increased risk of developing more than 30 obesity-related diseases and conditions including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers. In 2013, the American Medical Association (AMA) declared obesity a disease.

Anyone 18 and older is eligible to submit videos or films of **five minutes or less** that address the topic of obesity in any genre, including drama, documentary, animation, journalism, public service announcements, experimental or music videos. There is no fee for submission. Entries must be received by midnight, October 1, 2015. For instructions on how to submit and terms and conditions, please visit www.itstartsnow.asmb.org.

Some ideas for video and filmmakers to consider include:

- Unmet society needs
- What makes obesity a disease like cancer or heart disease
- Treating Obesity as a Disease with counseling, medications, surgery
- Obesity in America
- Cost of Obesity
- Obesity as a Family Disease
- Obesity: Balancing Prevention and Treatment Strategies
- Combatting weight stigma and discrimination
- Life transformations and personal struggles and triumphs
- Solutions to the obesity epidemic

The ASMBS seeks to build upon its previous motivational video, ***It Starts Today***. This motivational video tells three stories from the perspectives of a nurse, military veteran and former NFL player. Watch it at <http://asmbs.org/video-it-starts-today-obesity-surgery-helps-people-reclaim-their-lives>.

About the ASMBS

The ASMBS is the largest organization for bariatric surgeons in the nation. It is a non-profit organization that works to advance the art and science of bariatric surgery and is committed to educating medical professionals and the lay public about bariatric surgery as an option for the treatment of morbid obesity, as well as the associated risks and benefits. It encourages its members to investigate and discover new advances in obesity, while maintaining a steady exchange of experiences and ideas that may lead to improved outcomes for morbidly obese patients. For more information, visit www.asmbs.org.

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