

# Classification of Obesity as a Disease Has Huge Employment Law Implications

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News broke that the [American Medical Association voted to re-classify obesity from a condition to a disease](#).

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This decision by the AMA, however, will likely flip that conventional wisdom on its head. The ADA, as amended in 2009, is so broad that it covers virtually any diagnosed medical condition as a "disability." Now, employers will have to consider reasonable accommodations for anyone with a body mass index of 30 or over. Also, anyone who appears to have that BMI will have potential protections from terminations and other adverse actions related to that perceived "disease."

While this expanded coverage of the ADA is problematic, this issue raises a deeper, more troubling problem. The goals of the ADA are commendable. Yet, as we expand the ADA to cover non-traditional medical conditions, a backlash is inevitable. Protecting the unworthy will erode the desire to protect the worthy. Every time an overweight worker sues for disability discrimination will cost those suffering from illnesses that deserve to be protected.

Congress was correct in amending the ADA to restore the original intent of the statute. Obesity protections, however, illustrate that perhaps those amendments went too far.