

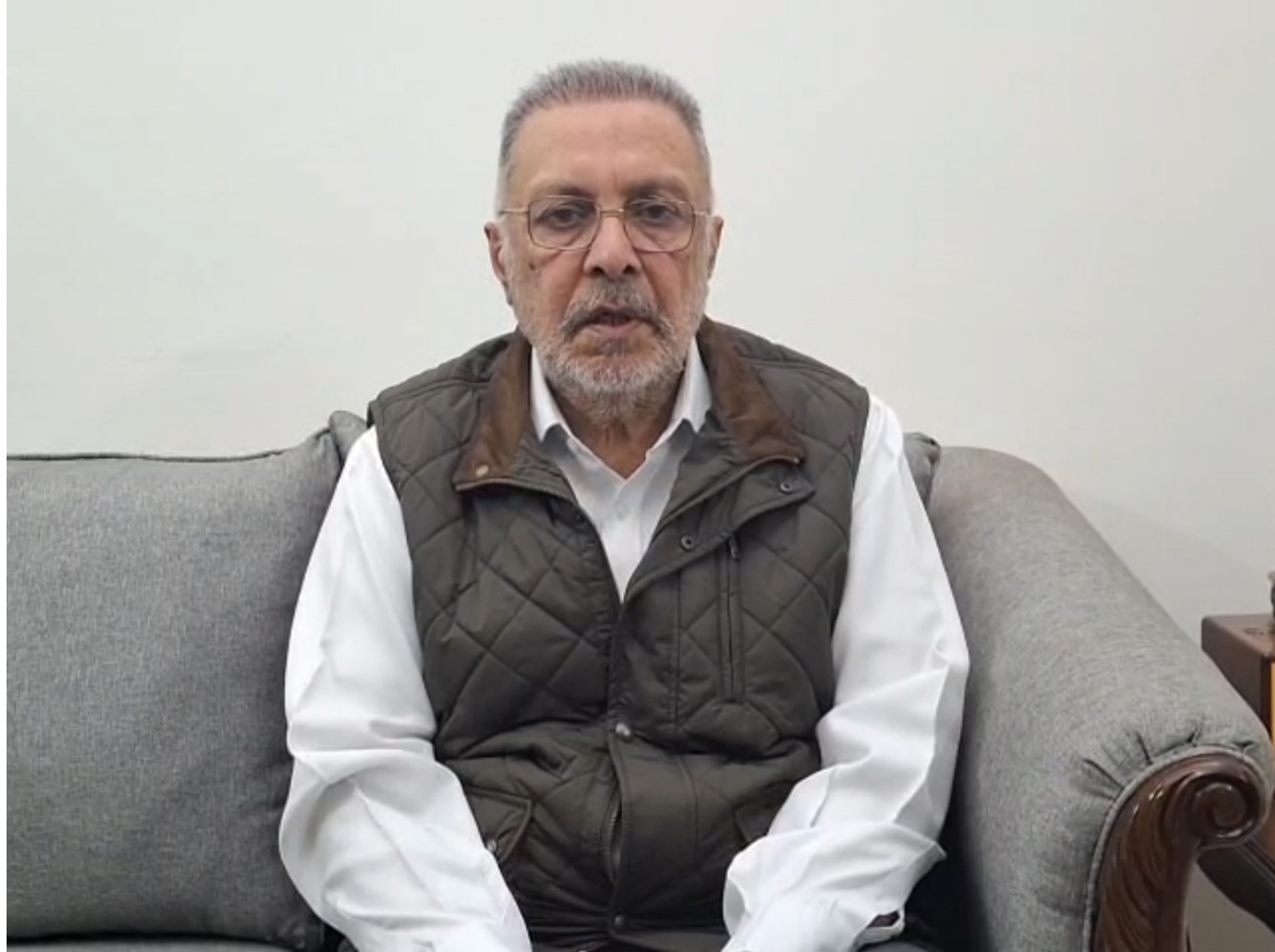


ACT EARLY PRIORITIZING OBESITY IN PUNJAB

A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSION

Summary Report

December 23, 2025



Background

Obesity has emerged as one of the most pressing public health challenges, contributing significantly to the global burden of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and certain cancers. Once considered a condition of affluence, obesity now affects populations across all socioeconomic strata and age groups, with a rapid epidemiological transition observed in low- and middle-income countries, including India.

In India, the prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased steadily over the last two decades. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data indicate that more than one in four adults are overweight or obese, with a particularly sharp rise among urban women and men aged 30–49 years. Urbanization, dietary transitions toward high-calorie processed foods, declining physical activity, and social determinants have accelerated this trend. The growing prevalence of obesity among adolescents and young adults further signals a shift in the age of onset, posing long-term risks for metabolic disorders and premature mortality. Punjab exemplifies this dual burden, where undernutrition persists alongside increasing rates of overweight and obesity. The state's advanced health infrastructure and robust NCD screening systems provide a unique opportunity to integrate obesity management within existing health programs. While the state has demonstrated leadership in tackling diabetes, stroke and cardiovascular diseases, obesity remains insufficiently institutionalized within its public health agenda, lacking dedicated programmatic structures, guidelines, and funding pathways.



About the Consultation

As part of its broader mission to advance collective action on the growing burden of obesity in India, People to People Health Foundation (PPHF) in collaboration with AIIMS Bhatinda, Eli Lilly and Indian Medical Parliamentarians Forum (IMPF) convened a state-level multi-stakeholder consultation in Chandigarh on 23rd December 2025 aimed at fostering dialogue, collaboration, and evidence informed solutions to tackle the growing burden of obesity in Punjab. The discussion brought together key representatives from the political leadership, National Health Mission, Municipal Corporation, Department of Sports and Youth Services, Punjab Development Commission, ESI, PGIMER, South Asian Obesity Forum, amongst other esteemed medical and public health experts, nutritionists, and healthcare institutions, alongside other sectoral stakeholders engaged in NCD prevention and health system strengthening. A summary of recommendations of have been assimilated below.



Key Recommendations

Short Term (0-6 months)

1. **Recommendation 1:** State Health Department to launch awareness campaigns with Sports and Education Department by engaging influencers, targeting all age groups and integrating the same into school health and Anganwadi programmes.
2. **Recommendation 2:** State government to issue policy/guidelines recognizing obesity as a chronic disease requiring long-term management, not only lifestyle advice.
3. **Recommendation 3:** Set up obesity corners/wings with intensive screening in the Pind (AAM) Clinics and referral for management to key secondary and tertiary care centers (district hospital and government medical colleges).
4. **Recommendation 4:** Skilling of healthcare providers (CHWs and Allied Health Professionals) in PPP mode, to be certified as obesity and diabetes educators, at Health Centres.

Medium Term (6 to 12 Months)

5. **Recommendation 5:** Increased finance to support obesity prevention and management efforts statewide.
6. **Recommendation 6:** Prioritize the evaluation of approved medical therapies for chronic weight and diabetes management to ensure comprehensive management.
7. **Recommendation 7:** Expand the scope of school-based counselling and proactively engage and counsel parents to promote early obesity prevention and healthy lifestyles practices amongst children.

Long Term (12-36 Months)

8. **Recommendation 8:** Implement a preventive strategy targeting food labelling, food marketing and taxation of unhealthy food, reform agricultural and food subsidy policies to prioritize nutrient-dense foods over ultra-processed products.
9. **Recommendation 9:** Focus on improving comprehensive NCD care including obesity and the inclusion of healthy school meals and integration of food science into the school curriculum.



Annexures: List of Participants

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1	Dr. Amrit Kaur Virk	Dr BR Ambedkar State Institute of Medical Sciences, Mohali
2	Dr. Anil Goyal	ESI, Punjab
3	Dr. Anuj	Health Department
4	Shri Anurag Kundu	Punjab Development Commission
5	Dr. Ashoo Grover	ICMR, Delhi
6	Dr. Ashu Gupta	DHS Punjab
7	Dr. Avnish Kumar	Department of Medical Education
8	Ms. Babit Batra	SEWA Punjab
9	Shri Babajeet Gill	SCERT
10	Dr. Balbir Singh (Virtually)	Health Minister, Government of Punjab
11	Mr. Buhran Ali	Punjab Red Cross
12	Ms. Cheena Malhotra	People to People Health Foundation
13	Dr. Divyesh Mundra	Eli Lilly
14	Dr. Gagan	DHS
15	Dr. Gagandeep Singh Grover	Department of Health and Family Welfare
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19	Dr. Inderdeep Kaur	Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh
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21	Dr. Laxmikant Palo	People to People Health Foundation
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25	Dr. Meenu Sharma	GMCH, Chandigarh
26	Dr. Nalini Kaushik	People to People Health Foundation
27	Mr. Narinder Singh	Sankalp Education Welfare Society
28	Dr. Navneet	WHO
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30	Dr. Poonam Khanna	PGIMER, Chandigarh
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35	Dr. Rakesh Kakkar	AIIMS Bhatinda
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37	Dr. Ratan Gupta	AIIMS Bhatinda
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40	Mr. Rajat Mehta	Swastha Alliance
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54	Ms. Tannu Priya	People to People Health Foundation
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