



## **Leading the Way — Meet Dr. Chiadi Ndumele, MD, PhD, MHS**

When Chiadi Ndumele was in high school, he volunteered with a community program that gave health screenings in local neighborhoods. Participants received their results plus tips to improve their health.

“Seeing the impact of those efforts helped me to realize that I could make an important difference for others in health-related work,” he said. That experience set him on a path to medical school and heart medicine. He now focuses on ways to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Dr. Ndumele is a preventive cardiologist and epidemiologist and the director of Obesity and Cardiometabolic Research at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. He is also the lead researcher of the Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™ Study.

The study is a nationwide research effort led by the American Heart Association. Its goal is to understand long-term health experiences of adults living with obesity or those who are overweight.

“As an epidemiologist, I focus on better understanding patterns of different conditions,” he said. He is particularly interested in the risk factors for heart disease that can be modified to prevent heart disease.

His focus on heart disease, obesity, and metabolic health makes him a natural fit to lead Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™. The study:

- Explores how adults manage weight and health challenges
- Shows how specific ways of managing weight affect health over time
- Provides education and support for participants

“As a physician and researcher, I have focused on overweight and obesity as very common health challenges that can contribute to heart disease risk,” Dr. Ndumele said. He has noticed that many patients have the same group of conditions. These include diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney

disease and heart disease. This led him to focus on heart, kidney and metabolic health. Those systems are connected and are often the result of excess weight.

He's also interested in the different ways excess weight can affect health. Some people have few or no health challenges, while others have many health conditions. "Understanding the reasons for these differences is another key interest." The study "will fill some key gaps in our scientific understanding," Dr. Ndumele said.

Filling those gaps is crucial. More than 70% of adults in the U.S. face challenges with their weight and improving their health. Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™ participants will help advance science and treatment by providing data and feedback. Their input will help health care professionals and researchers make better decisions.

"Healthy Living BEYOND Weight will be particularly impactful in helping us to understand the lived experiences of individuals," Dr. Ndumele said. Researchers want to know about the real-world and long-term effects of obesity management strategies. This includes GLP-1 therapies such as semaglutide and tirzepatide.

People have many questions about the long-term effects of GLP-1 therapies, including:

- Effects of stopping or changing medications
- Use of non-FDA-approved medications
- Symptoms and quality of life

The Healthy Living BEYOND Weight™ Study aims to answer those questions. Then, health care professionals can adapt how they support people with excess weight.

The study is unique because it uses both medical data and patient experiences. Participants will share information on:

- Lifestyle, eating and health habits
- Medication
- Side effects
- Weight
- Physical activity
- Quality of life

"Healthy Living BEYOND Weight will give us real-world insights about weight management therapies," Dr. Ndumele said.

This work connects to his early interest in making a difference. And it supports one of his overall goals as a health care professional. "I am very interested in understanding how we can make it easier for people to live healthier lives and in finding new ways to reduce risk for heart disease."