

Comedian's Viral Twitter Rant Highlights Dangers of 'Fatphobia' and Cancer Stigma

A doctor told the new mom she just needed to lose weight to feel better. Turns out, she had cancer.

August 21, 2019 By [Casey Halter](#)

When doctors misdiagnose, undertreat or refuse to care for patients because they are obese or overweight, that's called weight stigma—and it can put peoples' lives at risk. This week, one woman's experience with such "fatphobia" and cancer went viral on social media, shining new light on the barriers thousands of overweight Americans face when looking for care and treatment.

As detailed in a now-viral Twitter thread, Los Angeles-based comedian Jen Curran says her doctor told her to simply "lose weight" after she experienced high blood pressure and protein in her urine during and after her first pregnancy. Curran, who says she has been overweight on and off for most of her life, sought a second opinion. After several tests by a different doctor, she was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a form of bone marrow cancer.

Of her first doctor, Curran writes: "I wanted to believe her but it didn't feel right to me." Later in the thread, she reasoned, "Lose weight if you want to. But if you think something is seriously wrong with your body, and a doctor tells you weight loss is the key to fixing it, get a goddamn second opinion."

Curran says she shared her story on Twitter to encourage other people to advocate for themselves when it comes to their health. Since posting last week, she's been met with tens of thousands of comments from men, women, doctors and patients who have offered their support and related to her story.

In fact, studies show that weight stigma hurts people and outcomes across the health care community—from mental health to diabetes to HIV/AIDS. Weight stigma also makes it less likely for people who are overweight to seek medical care, even for issues like cancer treatment that have nothing to do with their weight.

Curran says she's determined to beat cancer while raising her new baby. She started chemotherapy treatment on August 13.

To read Jen Curran's viral Tweet thread, [click here](#).

For further reading on cancer and patient stigma, check out "[The Lung Cancer Blame Game](#)"

To read an online magazine about multiple myeloma, [click here](#).

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