

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Subject: Coverage for weight loss
Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 1:04:20 PM

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Good afternoon,

This email is directed to all current members of the Wisconsin Group Insurance Board. I am a long-time state employee, currently with the Wisconsin Elections Commission. I appreciate the comprehensive benefits we enjoy as state employees. I am writing to ask if the board is considering adding weight loss coverage to the uniform benefits coverage, including pharmacy coverage.

Obesity is both a statewide and nationwide epidemic and recently the FDA has approved multiple drugs (semaglutide and tirzepatide) for use to combat this chronic disease. By treating obesity as the chronic disease it is, many other health problems will be positively affected. The health of our state's workforce will improve in many and varied ways. Sick time away from work will be reduced and health care costs will go down as well.

In the past the GIB has instituted wellness policies to lower costs and increase the health of its members. Extending coverage for weight loss treatment, including this new class of weight loss drugs, would continue this important work.

Many, if not most, of the public workforce cannot afford these drugs without insurance assistance. Please add this to the 2024 coverage package.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dawn M. Soletski





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April 12, 2023

Dawn Soletski
[REDACTED]

Dear Dawn Soletski:

Thank you for your email to the Group Insurance Board (Board) regarding adding weight-loss drug coverage to uniform benefits for plan year 2024.

The Board cannot add coverage for benefits that are not mandated by law unless savings can be demonstrated or other benefits are reduced (see [Wis. Stats. § 40.03\(6\)\(c\)](#)). The Board reviewed coverage of weight-loss drugs at the June 30, 2022, meeting. As noted in the "[Weight-Loss Drug Coverage Options Review](#)" memo, the Board's actuary, Segal, estimated the cost of adding weight-loss drugs to the Board's non-Medicare formulary would be between \$12 million–\$17 million per year or about \$11,000 to \$13,000 per person. These drugs are expected to be taken by patients for life. The most recently-available studies produced on these drugs report they are only estimated to save about \$1,400 per patient per year. This was one of the reasons the Board was not able to add coverage

Another reason why the Board is hesitant to add coverage is the effect of taking weight-loss drugs for multiple years is unknown and studies are currently being conducted. Weight-loss drug manufacturers have conducted studies of the short-term effects of taking weight-loss drugs for up to 72 weeks. However, most research has shown that people will be on weight-loss drugs for multiple years and, in some cases, possibly the rest of their lives. Long-term studies of weight-loss drugs aim to answer the questions of whether weight regain may occur over time despite continued therapy, maintaining weight loss is viable under the drug, and the good and bad health effects of taking weight-loss drugs for a long duration. The timelines and release dates of the information from these ongoing studies are unknown.

The Board continues to examine overall wellness for members including weight management. At their November 2022 meeting, the Board received a "[Weight Management Analysis](#)" memo and presentation from ETF staff with a comprehensive review of methods to address overweight and obesity and the available evidence related to treatments.

Dawn Soletski

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Furthermore, during the February 22, 2023, Board meeting, the Board received a ["2024 Preliminary Agreement and Benefit Changes"](#) memo and presentation regarding possible health insurance and pharmacy benefit changes for 2024. Coverage of weight-loss drugs is discussed in that memo.

At the upcoming May 17, 2023, Board meeting, ETF staff will present the Board with their findings regarding preliminary changes, including the addition of weight-loss drug coverage for 2024. The May meeting agenda, Board memos, and other materials will be posted to the ETF website on the ["Group Insurance Board Meeting Agendas and Materials"](#) page before the meeting.

Again, thank you for your email. If you have any other questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,

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