

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Subject: Re: Adding anti-obesity medications to the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program
Date: Tuesday, May 23, 2023 11:03:08 AM

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[REDACTED]

On Wed, Apr 12, 2023 at 9:30 AM Stephanie Fox [REDACTED] > wrote:
April 12, 2023

TO: The Group Insurance Board (GIB)

FROM: Stephanie Fox, Teacher, School District of North Fond du Lac

RE: Adding anti-obesity medications to the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program

Hello,

As a public employee at The School District of North Fond du Lac, I am writing to you regarding the consideration for anti-obesity medications (AOMs) to be added to the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program so public employees have equitable access to the care we need. Healthcare providers have endorsed these medications as a way to treat obesity without surgery or surgical after care. As part of a chronic weight loss or management program, these medicines have proved to increase an individuals weight loss over time and also allowed individuals to decrease or even cease the use of other medications they have to use to combat the side-effects of chronic obesity. Adding AOMs to the health insurance program for public employees can lead to numerous benefits, such as improved health outcomes and quality of life for members, increased productivity, etc.

[REDACTED]

Providing members with access to AOMs in our health insurance plans would contribute to better weight management, which also leads to improved health outcomes and a lower risk of

developing chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and certain types of cancer. Further, obesity has a significant impact on an individual's quality of life, such as decreased mobility, lower self-esteem and depression. By including AOMs in the state insurance health plan helps folks more easily manage their weight and improve their overall quality of life, while reducing the risk of related, serious health issues.

Allowing these medications with prior authorization to be covered by ebf medical insurance plans not only offers an affordable, convenient option for individuals needing to lose weight and manage their chronic disease, but also would show members that the State of Wisconsin benefit plans meet their employees needs. All our neighboring states (Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan) offer anti-obesity medication as a benefit to their public employees. The Wisconsin Medicaid program offers anti-obesity medication as a benefit to their recipients. I am asking the GIB to add AOMs to the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program as well. Thank you for your consideration on this matter and allowing me to advocate as an employee on this issue.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Fox



STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Employee Trust Funds
A. John Voelker
SECRETARY

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May 23, 2023

Stephanie Fox
[REDACTED]

Dear Stephanie Fox:

Thank you for your email to the Group Insurance Board (Board) regarding adding coverage of anti-obesity medications (AOMs) to the Group Health Insurance Program (GHIP). My apologies for our delayed response; it is the policy of the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) to focus our responses on correspondence from members of the GHIP. [REDACTED]

I'm sorry that you're disappointed that coverage of AOMs under the GHIP was not added for 2024.

The Board faces limitations on adding coverage for benefits that are not mandated by law unless savings can be demonstrated, or benefits are reduced (see [Wis. Stat. § 40.03\(6\)\(c\)](#)). The Board reviewed coverage of AOMs through the pharmacy benefit 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. The most recently available studies produced on these drugs report they are only estimated to save about \$1,400 per person who takes the drug per year.

Another reason the Board is hesitant to add coverage is uncertainty about the long-term effects of these drugs. AOM drug manufacturers have conducted studies of the short-term effects of taking AOMs for up to 72 weeks. However, most research indicates that people will be on AOMs for multiple years and, in some cases, possibly the rest of their lives. Long-term studies of AOMs aim to answer the questions of whether weight regain may occur over time despite continued therapy, whether 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

Stephanie Fox

May 23, 2023

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Most recently, at the meeting on May 17, 2023, the Board revisited the possibility of adding AOMs to the pharmacy formulary beginning January 1, 2024. As cited beginning on page 9 in the "[2024 Program Agreement and Benefit Changes](#)" memo, the same issues still exist in 2023 that existed in 2022, including a lack of studies about the effects of long-term weight loss drug usage and the high price of the drugs.

In your email, you observed that some state employees in neighboring states have coverage of AOMs, which is correct. However, that coverage varies, and often other requirements must be met. For example, a Minnesota State employee must pay the full cost of AOMs for three months and lose five percent of their body weight before the Minnesota State pharmacy benefit would start to pay for the AOM. These requirements significantly limit the number of Minnesota State Employees who take weight-loss drugs.

GHIP members can obtain some AOMs, such as Wegovy and Saxenda, at a discounted rate. The drugs on the attached "Department of Employee Trust Funds Discount Drug List" are not covered by the GHIP's pharmacy benefit but can be obtained at the negotiated rate Navitus Health Solutions, the Board's Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM), has with the pharmacy filling the drug prescription. The pharmacy-negotiated rate will be lower than the full price of the drug. Please note that the price a member pays will not count towards any out-of-pocket limits (OOPL) or any pharmacy deductible.

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,

Tricia Sieg, Pharmacy Benefits Program Manager

Office of Strategic Health Policy

Department of Employee Trust Funds

tricia.sieg@etf.wi.gov

608-261-6006

Department of Employee Trust Funds Discount Drug List

Updated January 2023

Prescriptions that are not covered by your pharmacy benefit may be available at a discounted rate. This may include drugs for infertility, weight loss, cosmetic or other lifestyle needs as prescribed by your doctor. You can use your Health Care Flexible Spending account to pay for them, with a prescription.

DRUG	Copay	Drug Category
ADIPEX-P CAP	100%	WEIGHT LOSS
ADIPEX-P TAB	100%	WEIGHT LOSS
AVAGE CREAM	100%	COSMETICS
CAVERJECT INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
cetrorelix acetate for inj kit	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
CETROTIDE INJ KIT	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
CHROMELIN SOLN	100%	COSMETICS
CLOMID TAB, CLOMIPHENE CITRATE TAB	100%	INFERTILITY
CLOMIPHENE CITRATE POWDER	100%	INFERTILITY
CONTRACE TAB	100%	WEIGHT LOSS
DY-O-DERM SOLN	100%	COSMETICS
EDEX INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
finasteride tab	100%	COSMETICS
FOLLISTIM AQ INJ	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
ganirelix ac inj	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
GONAL-F RFF INJ	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
hydroquinone cream	100%	COSMETICS
leuprolide inj	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
LUPRON DEPOT INJ	100%	INJECTABLES
LUSTRA CREAM	100%	COSMETICS
MENOPUR INJ	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
METHOXSALEN POWDER	100%	COSMETICS
minoxidil soln	100%	COSMETICS
MUSE SUPP	100%	SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
OVIDREL INJ	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
PAPAVERINE/ALPROSTADIL INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
PAPAVERINE/PHENTOLAMINE INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
PAPAVERINE/PHENTOLAMINE/ALPROSTADIL INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
phentermine cap	100%	WEIGHT LOSS
phentermine tab	100%	WEIGHT LOSS
PHENTOLAMINE/ALPROSTADIL INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
PREGNYL INJ	100%	INFERTILITY

PROPECIA TAB	100%	COSMETICS
QSYMIA CAP	100%	WEIGHT LOSS
RENOVA CREAM	100%	COSMETICS
ROGAINE SOLN	100%	COSMETICS
SAXENDA INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, WEIGHT LOSS
sildenafil tab	100%	SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
STENDRA	100%	SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
tadalafil tab	100%	SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
TRELSTAR INJ	100%	INFERTILITY, INJECTABLES
TRI-LUMA CREAM	100%	COSMETICS
VANIQA CREAM	100%	COSMETICS
varденаfil ODT	100%	SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
varденаfil tab	100%	SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION
VITADYE LOTION	100%	COSMETICS
WEGOVY INJ	100%	INJECTABLES, WEIGHT LOSS
WEGOVY INJ 1.7MG/0.75ML	100%	INJECTABLES, WEIGHT LOSS
WEGOVY INJ 2.4MG/0.75ML	100%	INJECTABLES, WEIGHT LOSS
XENICAL CAP	100%	WEIGHT LOSS