

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Subject: Letter in support of AOM coverage for employees
Date: Sunday, October 29, 2023 9:14:39 PM
Attachments: [GIB 1023.docx](#)

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Good evening,

Attached is my letter requesting consideration of coverage of anti-obesity medications for state employees.

Thank you,

Leslie Golden MD MPH
Wisconsin Obesity Society President

**Leslie Golden MD MPH
Weight In Gold Wellness
123 Hospital Drive Suite 212
Watertown, WI 53098
October 26, 2023**

**Wisconsin Group Insurance Board
Wisconsin Employee Trust Fund**

Dear Members of the Wisconsin Group Insurance Board,

I am writing to express my strong support for the inclusion of anti-obesity medications as part of state employee health benefits provided by the Wisconsin Employee Trust Fund. I understand that one of the major concerns regarding this proposal is the cost of these medications. In this letter, I will outline several compelling reasons why covering anti-obesity medications is not only justified but also in the best interest of the state and its employees.

First and foremost, it is essential to recognize that obesity is a complex and chronic disease that affects a significant portion of the population in Wisconsin and across the United States. It is characterized by an excessive accumulation of body fat, leading to a multitude of health complications, including diabetes, heart disease, and certain cancers. Obesity is associated with an increased risk of morbidity and mortality, making it a major public health concern. It is important to emphasize that obesity is a disease, and like any other chronic condition, it deserves comprehensive medical coverage.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that no other chronic disease requires proof of cost savings to justify health insurance coverage. There are many conditions like terminal cancers that are treated without the need to demonstrate cost-effectiveness. Obesity should be treated with the same level of seriousness and without the additional burden of proving cost savings, especially when the medical community recognizes it as a disease.

Another crucial point to consider is the cost of not treating obesity. Obesity-related healthcare costs are substantial, and they encompass expenses related to the treatment of various obesity-related conditions, medications, and

surgeries. In addition to the direct healthcare costs, there are indirect costs such as lost productivity and absenteeism, which have a significant impact on both individuals and the economy as a whole. By covering anti-obesity medications, we have the opportunity to prevent or mitigate these obesity-related costs, ultimately saving the state money in the long run.

When comparing the cost of anti-obesity medications to the cost of not treating obesity, the choice becomes clear. Anti-obesity medications, when used in conjunction with lifestyle interventions, can help individuals achieve and maintain a healthier weight, reducing the risk of obesity-related complications and the associated healthcare costs. While there may be an upfront cost for providing coverage for these medications, the long-term financial benefits in terms of reduced healthcare expenses and improved employee productivity should not be underestimated.

In addition to the aforementioned points, it is essential to consider the utilization of treatment algorithms and evidence-based guidelines as a means to control costs while ensuring effective care for individuals with obesity. These algorithms can help streamline the selection of appropriate anti-obesity medications, ensuring that only those individuals who meet specific criteria, such as a certain degree of disease severity or the presence of obesity-related comorbidities, are eligible for coverage. By following these guidelines, the Wisconsin Employee Trust Fund can strike a balance between providing comprehensive care for those who need it while controlling costs by limiting medication coverage to those who are most likely to benefit. This approach promotes responsible use of resources while continuing to address the significant health challenges associated with obesity.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Wisconsin Group Insurance Board to recognize obesity as a disease deserving of comprehensive medical coverage, including the inclusion of anti-obesity medications in state employee health benefits. By doing so, the state can take a proactive approach to address the obesity epidemic, improve the health and well-being of its employees, and ultimately reduce the long-term healthcare costs associated with this chronic condition.

I am available to provide further information or answer any questions you may have regarding this important matter. I appreciate your attention to this issue

and your commitment to the health and well-being of Wisconsin state employees.

Sincerely,

Leslie Golden MD MPH

Weight In Gold Wellness

Wisconsin Obesity Society President

Obesity Medicine Association National Advocacy Committee