

From: [REDACTED]
To: [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)
Subject: Insurance Board Coverage: Anti-Obesity Medicine
Date: Thursday, January 4, 2024 2:04:37 PM

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January 4, 2024

Hello,

Happy New Year! My name is Christina Spector, and I am a state employee at UW-Madison. I am a proud employee of our great state, and I want to do everything possible to ensure we maintain the best workforce possible.

I wrote you last in April 2023, and am again writing to implore you to consider adding anti-obesity medications (AOMs) to the State Group Health Insurance Program. It is a new year and you can take a look at the mounting research demonstrating the importance of the ability to access AOMs. As I'm sure you know, other Midwestern states, the Wisconsin Medicaid program, and the federal government have approved AOM coverage for their plans. It is our turn to make sure our state employees have this critical access as well.

While the costs of AOMs are considerable, the costs to society because of the obesity epidemic are greater, and continue to grow. Access to AOMs would help employees manage long-term, expensive, health issues in a timely way. We need to allow health practitioners to have every tool in their toolbox to fight this epidemic.

I am lucky that I do not personally need AOMs at this time, but if the situation should arise and my medical provider thought they were appropriate, I would want to have this option for myself and my family. I know several state employees who have undergone gastric bypass surgery over the past few years. Their struggles with obesity led to additional healthcare costs due to issues like decreased mobility, self-esteem, and depression, an increased risk of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Without AOMs, drastic surgery was their only medical option after trying other unsuccessful approaches. Had they had the opportunity to access AOMs, the costly surgery (both in time, lost productivity at work and home, and personal risk) could have been avoided.

Allowing these medications with prior authorization to be covered by ETF medical insurance plans not only offers an affordable, convenient option for individuals needing to lose weight and manage a chronic disease but also would show members that the State of Wisconsin benefit plans meet their employee's needs. I am asking the GIB to add AOMs to the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program beginning in 2025. Thank you for your serious consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,
Christina Spector



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January 5, 2024

Christina Spector
[REDACTED]

Dear Christina Spector:

Thank you for your most recent email to the Group Insurance Board (Board) regarding adding coverage of anti-obesity medications (AOMs) to the Group Health Insurance Program (GHIP).

The Board will consider 2025 GHIP changes at its February 21, 2024, meeting. The agenda, memos, and presentations for that meeting will be posted on the Department of Employee Trust Funds' (ETF's) ["Group Insurance Board Meeting Agendas and Materials"](#) webpage about a week prior to the meeting.

While ETF staff continues to monitor cost-effectiveness research, the current pricing of these drugs is still greater than the measurable savings. The Board must still adhere to [Wis. Stat. § 40.03\(6\)\(c\)](#) that only allows the Board to add benefits to the GHIP if the addition is mandated by law or if a savings can be demonstrated. If neither of these provisions are met, the Board must reduce benefits to allow for the addition of new benefits.

Recent market data has suggested that AOMs account for 1% of annual premium increases for 2024. The Board would either need to reduce \$18M in benefits to accommodate this cost increase, greater savings values would need to be shown in literature, or pharmaceutical companies would need to reduce prices to bring the costs in line with the demonstrated benefits.

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.

Happy New Year to you too!

Sincerely,

Christina Spector
January 5, 2024
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