

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [ETF SMB Board Feedback](#)  
**Subject:** Anti Obesity Medication Benefit  
**Date:** Sunday, February 18, 2024 6:05:05 PM

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Dear Members of the Group Insurance Board,

My name is Sara Moldenhauer and I serve as a Physician Assistant at UW Health where I've worked for 1 year helping patients living with complex chronic pain and related conditions. I believe in a holistic, full person approach to treatment that leverages the latest innovations as well as mind-body techniques such as Barre fitness.

A lot of the patients I treat are overweight and often obese, which is a huge challenge that is only getting worse. We need to do much more as a State to combat the obesity epidemic which is causing more people to live in pain along with other debilitating conditions that can make treatment more difficult and lead to diminished quality of life.

I understand that this board is again considering expanding coverage to include the latest FDA approved weight loss medicines that I believe could make a big difference for patients, many of whom have tried for years to lose weight to no avail. I meet and treat these folks regularly and it is heartbreaking to know that there are treatments that could help them that they do not currently have access to due to cost and coverage impediments.

While the costs of any medical intervention need to be considered, I believe it is imperative that this board take a long term view of the system-wide costs of obesity in Wisconsin and nationally. I have reviewed the recently publicized packet in advance of next week's meeting and I don't believe that the Board's actuary has extrapolated out the potential health and cost savings over a long enough period. We need to be thinking in terms of the next 15-25 years if we want to make real changes to how we treat obesity by embracing an comprehensive, science-based approach.

Most of my fellow practitioners look at the entire lifespan of someone and making the right choices today can and will lead to positive benefits both from a population wide health outcomes and bending the cost curve down.

There is also the important issue of worker productivity and encouraging a competitive benefits environment for state and local employees who are part of the group plans. Healthier workforces have less absenteeism, workplace injuries/loss time, turnover (which is costly) and long term health costs than less healthy ones. Moreover, many of our close Midwest state neighbors and the group plans for Federal workers already offer coverage to some or all eligible group plan members who meet clinical criteria for obesity. There is no reason that Wisconsin should not follow suit by at minimum providing coverage options for the most at risk patients right now.

As healthcare professionals, we should be equipped with every tool possible to provide comprehensive care, and this includes access to effective anti-obesity medications.

I urge the Group Insurance Board to do the right thing by state employees and expand this coverage at its earliest convenience. Doing so will improve long term health outcomes and costs for the next generation and it will ensure that Wisconsin remains a destination for the best public sector workers.

Thank you for your time and attention, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Sara Moldenhauer, PA  
Pain Management Specialist  
UW Health Pain Management Program

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