

GLP-1s for Weight Loss and How PBMs Are Rising to the Challenges

Semaglutide, liraglutide, and tirzepatide are all glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1)¹ agonists initially approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for type 2 diabetes and more recently for weight management. These drugs are marketed by their manufacturers using different names based on indication, meaning the same active ingredient has two different brand name products.

Same Drug, Different Prices

Each GLP-1 drug pair has a different price for each indication; the drugs indicated for weight management are generally pricier² than those indicated for diabetes.

Current List Prices of GLP-1 Drugs Indicated for Both Type 2 Diabetes and Weight Management

Active Ingredient	Type 2 Diabetes Brand-name	List Price (per month)	Weight Management Brand-name	List Price (per month)
Semaglutide	Ozempic (0.5mg/3ml)	\$968.52 ³	Wegovy (2.4mg/0.75ml)	\$1,349.02 ⁴
Liraglutide	Victoza (6mg/ml)	\$543.51 ⁵	Saxenda (3mg/0.5ml)	\$1,349.02 ⁶
Tirzepatide	Mounjaro (5mg/0.5ml)	\$1,069.08 ⁷	Zepbound (5mg/0.5ml)	\$1,059.87 ⁸

The net prices of these drugs—after rebates and discounts—may also be higher for the weight management version than the diabetes version. For one pair of GLP-1 drugs, the net price received by the manufacturer was reported to be almost 2.5 times greater⁹ for the weight management version than the diabetes version. High prices create affordability challenges.

PBMs Are Here to Help

In a recent survey, 91%¹⁰ of commercial plan sponsors said they covered GLP-1s for diabetes, while 33% covered them for weight management. Plan sponsors that did not cover GLP-1s for weight management reported excluding them because they thought they were too expensive. When plan sponsors choose to cover these drugs, PBMs are helping to make them accessible to patients who need them.

PBMs are innovating comprehensive programs that combine GLP-1 drugs with lifestyle changes to aid patients, address affordability concerns, and ease access challenges. Plan sponsors can choose to add these programs to their pharmacy benefits for their insured members. These add-on programs consist of a behavior support component where the patient is helped to make permanent changes related to obesity, including diet and exercise, in tandem with the use of GLP-1s.



1 Cleveland Clinic. "GLP-1 Agonists"

2 AEI. "Economic Perspectives: Estimating the Cost of New Treatments for Diabetes and Obesity." 2023.

3 Novo Pricing. "Ozempic."

4 NovoCare. "What is the list price for Wegovy® and will it impact me?"

5 Novo Pricing. "Victoza"

6 NovoCare. "What is the list price for Saxenda® and will it impact me?"

7 Lilly. "How much should I expect to pay for Mounjaro?"

8 Lilly. "How much should I expect to pay for Zepbound?"

9 AEI. "Economic Perspectives: Estimating the Cost of New Treatments for Diabetes and Obesity." 2023.

10 PSG. "Trends in Drug Benefit Design Report." 2024.

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