



Frequently Asked Questions

GLP-1 Weight Loss Medications & the WakeMed Medical Plan

Background: Effective January 1, 2025, GLP-1 medications for weight-loss are excluded from the WakeMed medical plan prescription drug coverage. GLP-1 medications will be covered for those health plan members with a diagnosis of diabetes.

What are GLP-1 medications?

GLP-1s are a group of mostly injectable medications used to manage diabetes and weight loss, among other indications. Common GLP-1s used for weight loss include Wegovy and Zepbound.

Who made this decision and why?

WakeMed has a self-funded medical plan, which means that the costs for the medical plan – including plan administration, payments to health care providers and pharmacy costs – are paid by WakeMed and our employees (through your premium deductions).

In the past year, the cost of covering GLP-1s for reached over \$18 million, which far exceeds any other medication cost. To put this in perspective, the overall pharmacy spend for our self-funded medical plan is typically more than \$35 million.

WakeMed leadership spent significant time weighing options to continue coverage of GLP-1s for weight loss. However, to avoid significant premium increases for all employees to offset the cost of these medications, the difficult decision was made to stop covering GLP-1s for weight loss.

I take a GLP-1 for diabetes (Ozempic, Mounjaro, Trulicity, etc.), will this be covered?

Yes. GLP-1 medications will be covered for those with a diagnosis of diabetes, which WakeMed defines as a current or historical Hemoglobin A1C value greater than or equal to 6.5%.

For new start diabetics, WakeMed requires both HgA1c of 6.5 or greater and a 90-day trial of metformin before a GLP-1 will be approved. Additionally, all medical plan members with a diagnosis of diabetes will be supported through WakeMed's medication therapy management program, MyRxPlus.

GLP-1s are a long-term medication with many positive benefits, why would WakeMed discontinue coverage?

This decision was very difficult to make and came only after many months of collaborative dialogue across senior and clinical leadership. Like many other organizations across North Carolina and the nation, the cost of covering these medications for weight loss was the primary factor in the decision.

While these medications are effective in supporting weight loss, once goal weight is achieved through the use of medication, exercise and diet, there are less expensive alternatives/options to support maintenance which will continue to be covered by the health plan.

What alternatives are there for plan members who have been taking GLP-1s for weight loss?

WakeMed will continue to cover alternative medications for weight loss, many of which are proven to be very effective.



For those who desire to continue taking the GLP-1 medications, they may be available at area pharmacies for a cash price, which varies based on eligibility for copay assistance. We encourage interested employees and dependents to thoroughly research alternate options to ensure safety and quality of medications obtained.

Below are several options that provide alternative access to these medications, outside of the medical plan. WakeMed is providing the following resources for employee knowledge only and does not endorse any of these options:

- [Triangle Compounding Pharmacy](#) will offer a discounted program for health care workers in 2025. Contact Triangle Compounding and inquire about the “healthcare heroes” program
- WakeMed retail pharmacies offer GLP-1s at a cash price for existing patients and WakeMed employees and dependents. Customers will be supported through WakeMed’s medication therapy management program, MyRxPlus, to maintain active engagement with a pharmacist resource and be assured access to the lowest available cash price.
- Eli Lilly’s [Lilly Direct program](#) has resources to help customers get medications delivered directly to them.

Please note that out-of-pocket expenses for medications obtained outside of the medical plan do not apply to deductibles, copays, and out-of-pocket maximums. In many cases, FSA and HRA cards can be used for purchase, but that must be verified before purchase.

Can I switch to the diabetic versions of these medications and get coverage even if I don’t have diabetes?

No.

Can I continue to have my GLP-1s filled at the WakeMed Employee Pharmacy until January 1?

Yes, the WakeMed Employee Pharmacy will continue to fill GLP-1 weight loss prescriptions for employees and dependents until December 31, 2024.

I have a prior authorization in place that expires after January 1, 2025, will that still be valid after January 1?

No.

Can I fill my weight loss GLP-1 prescription for more than a one-month supply? For example, can I do an early refill in December and get two prescriptions filled that month?

No.

Will the WakeMed plan cover other weight loss medications?

Yes. Alternate weight-loss medications will be covered after January 1, 2025.

Who can I speak to for more information?

The Benefits team is available to answer questions about this change and can be reached by emailing benefits@wakemed.org. Please note that there are often high email volumes during Open Enrollment, but we will do our best to get back to you in a timely manner.