



## GLP-1 Medications and Preauthorization

### What are GLP-1 Medications?

GLP-1 agonists are a class of medications that mainly help manage blood sugar (glucose) levels in people with type 2 diabetes. They help slow digestion, so the body releases less sugar from food into the bloodstream – increasing the sensation of feeling full after eating.

While these medications were originally meant to help people manage type 2 diabetes, more recently they've become popular as weight-loss medications.

- Most GLP-1 medications are injectable and cost roughly \$1,000 per member per month.
- Some GLP-1 medications (e.g., Mounjaro<sup>®</sup>, Ozempic<sup>®</sup>, Rybelsus<sup>®</sup>, Trulicity<sup>®</sup> and Victoza<sup>®</sup>) are approved by the FDA for type 2 diabetes but not for weight loss. Therefore, these products are covered on Independent Health's formulary\* only for the treatment of type 2 diabetes.

### Why is Preauthorization Required?

To support evidence-based prescribing practices while optimizing access for members who need GLP-1 drugs, Independent Health implemented the following strategies and interventions in 2022:

- GLP-1s indicated for diabetes are blocked from coverage for members who do not have a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes in our system. (Some prescribers are prescribing these medications to patients for weight loss, which is contributing to drug shortages across the U.S. and Europe.)
- GLP-1s indicated for weight loss (e.g. Wegovy<sup>®</sup>, Saxenda<sup>®</sup> and Zepbound<sup>®</sup>) require prior authorization.\*
  - Prior authorization criteria require an in-person assessment and documentation of participation in evidence-based lifestyle management programs and outcomes before coverage is granted.

### Additional Resources

- [National Institutes of Health: Prescription Medications to Treat Overweight and Obesity](#)
- [WebMD: Prescription Weight Loss Drugs: GLP-1s, Tirzepatide, and More](#)



\* Benefits vary by plan. Check your plan documents for details on prescription drug coverage, applicable member cost share and other information associated with your plan.