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# Many Individuals Unable to Access Vital Weight Loss Medications Wegovy and Zepbound

## Description

As a bariatric medicine specialist in Norman, Oklahoma, Dr. Laure DeMattia understands the struggles faced by her patients in their quest to lose weight. She heads a clinic where numerous individuals grapple with obesity, and she believes that newly developed medications like Ozempic and Wegovy could provide significant help if only they were affordable.

Over the years, says Dr. DeMattia, her patients have implemented different approaches in a bid to control their weight. From popular diets like Weight Watchers and Nutrisystem to strategies involving high-protein, low-carb regimes, these individuals have often modified their lifestyles drastically. However, what many have not tried are monthly injections of semaglutide or tirzepatide. Despite the potential these drugs offer, their high cost and the complexity of insurance coverage creates barriers that can be prohibitive.

Dr. DeMattia voices particular concern for her patients from Medicare and Medicaid populations, which lack access to these essential anti-obesity medications. Obesity continues to be a persistent and serious health issue, with nearly half of the U.S adult population struggling under its ramifications. Unaddressed, obesity can lead to potentially life-threatening conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, or cancer.

The disparity in access to such drugs is accentuated by geographic and racial factors. Semaglutide, a key ingredient in Ozempic and Wegovy, is primarily accessible to white populations. Indeed, a 2023 analysis showed 85% of semaglutide national prescriptions were attributed to white patients. Disconcertingly, only 12% were dispensed to Black adults, a demographic with notably higher instances of obesity and diabetes.

After its approval for the treatment of diabetes seven years ago, medications like semaglutide and tirzepatide have been hailed as revolutionary. Despite the endorsements, coverage for these drugs is minimal, with PurpleLab analysis showing only 1% of the U.S population with insurance receiving semaglutide prescription coverage in 2023.

The expensive nature of these drugs presents a formidable barrier to those who need them most. Health insurance companies are often reluctant to cover the around \$1,000 monthly cost of such injections, throwing formidable hurdles in the path of effective obesity management.

Further cementing the unequal accessibility, other medications such as Eli Lilly's Zepbound or Mounjaro (tirzepatide for diabetes) were not included in the data. Oklahoma, which has an adult obesity rate of 40% (third highest in the U.S), does not feature even among the top 25 states for semaglutide prescriptions.

As individual stories reveal, the struggle to access these medical breakthroughs often feels insurmountable. Liz Shumate, for instance, even with her insurance policy from her place of work, can't afford the \$1,000 monthly prescription. Susan Beam, who suffers from excess weight related conditions like high blood pressure and rheumatoid arthritis, has her hopes dashed as Medicare doesn't cover her needed weight loss medications.



While health care professionals, too, feel the burden of inaccessible care, with doctors like Dr. Ryan Morgan describing it as “weight-based discrimination,” the question remains: Will Medicare ever cover weight loss drugs? This prohibition, coupled with the perceived view of obesity as a cosmetic issue, inhibits accessibility further.

With FDA’s recent approval to include heart attack and stroke reduction as potential benefits of Wegovy, greater coverage from insurers could potentially be on the horizon. However, with prohibitive pricing for such medication and a lack of competition rendering access difficult, equality in obesity treatment still seems a remote possibility.

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **Bariatric** // (adjective): Relating to the branch of medicine that deals with the treatment and control of obesity and diseases associated with obesity.
2. **Obesity** // (noun): The condition of being grossly fat or overweight.
3. **Medications** // (noun): Substances used for medical treatment especially in the form of a pill or injection.
4. **Affordable** // (adjective): Something that is reasonably priced and within one's financial means.
5. **Prescriptions** // (noun): Written directions for the preparation and administration of a drug or treatment.
6. **Insurmountable** // (adjective): Too great or extreme to be overcome.

## Vocabulary quizzes

### Multiple Choice ( Select the Correct answer for each question. )

1. Which term refers to the death or end of something?  
Option: Acclaimed  
Option: Confined  
Option: Demise  
Option: Indefinite
2. What do we call a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time?  
Option: Empathy  
Option: Captivating  
Option: Epidemic  
Option: Authenticity
3. Which term indicates a mutual relationship or connection between two or more things?  
Option: Baffling  
Option: Gullible  
Option: Correlation  
Option: Adherence
4. What word refers to actions that make something less severe serious or painful?  
Option: Decelerates  
Option: Mitigates  
Option: Amendments  
Option: Illuminate
5. Which term means a formal request usually written to a person or authority?



- Option: Tragically
- Option: Authentic
- Option: Intervention
- Option: Petition

6. What type of medical treatment involves the management of obesity?

- Option: Obesity
- Option: Medications
- Option: Bariatric
- Option: Affordable

7. What are written instructions from a medical practitioner that authorize the use of specific medications?

- Option: Insurmountable
- Option: Obesity
- Option: Medications
- Option: Prescriptions

8. Which word describes the quality of being genuine or real?

- Option: Correlation
- Option: Adherence
- Option: Authenticity
- Option: Baffling

9. What term is used to indicate the action of slowing down or reducing speed?

- Option: Mitigates
- Option: Decelerates
- Option: Amendments
- Option: Illuminate

10. Which word describes something that is reasonably priced and within one's financial means?

- Option: Petition
- Option: Bariatric
- Option: Obesity
- Option: Affordable

**Gap-Fill ( Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

11. The novel was \_\_\_\_\_ by critics for its originality and engaging plot.

12. It is important to educate people to dispel \_\_\_\_\_ they may have about certain topics.



13. Due to favorable conditions the species in that area is rapidly \_\_\_\_\_ .
14. Despite facing many challenges he never considered any obstacle to be \_\_\_\_\_ .
15. The story ended \_\_\_\_\_ with the protagonist meeting an untimely death.
16. The social worker recommended immediate \_\_\_\_\_ to prevent further escalation of the situation.
17. The antique dealer confirmed that the painting was indeed \_\_\_\_\_ and not a replica.
18. The government declared a state of emergency to address the \_\_\_\_\_ spreading of the disease.
19. The committee proposed several \_\_\_\_\_ to the existing policies to make them more effective.
20. The documentary aims to \_\_\_\_\_ the lives of the underprivileged in remote areas.

**Matching Sentences ( Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list. )**

21. Showing towards others can create a more compassionate society.
22. Being too can lead to falling for scams and deception easily.
23. The meeting was postponed to an date due to scheduling conflicts.
24. The disappearance of the artifacts remained a mystery for years.
25. The patient was to isolation to prevent the spread of the contagious disease.
26. Access to quality education is a that not everyone around the world has.
27. The doctor prescribed specific to manage the patient's condition.
28. The challenges they faced seemed at first but were eventually overcome.
29. The speaker delivered a speech that held the audience's attention throughout.



30. The store offered a wide range of products at prices attracting many customers.

## Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Demise 2. Epidemic 3. Correlation 4. Mitigates 5. Petition 6. Bariatric 7. Prescriptions  
8. Authenticity 9. Decelerates 10. Affordable

**Gap-Fill:** 11. Acclaimed 12. Misconceptions 13. Proliferating 14. Insurmountable 15. Tragically 16.  
Intervention 17. Authentic 18. Epidemic 19. Amendments 20. Illuminate

**Matching sentence:** 1. Empathy 2. Gullible 3. Indefinite 4. Baffling 5. Confined 6. Privilege 7. Medications  
8. Insurmountable 9. Captivating 10. Affordable

## CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL5

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