

# HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

June 26, 2024

The Honorable Jason Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard E. Neal  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal,

I write to you regarding the H.R. 4818, the “Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2023” seeking to expand Medicare coverage for GLP-1 weight loss drugs and am pleased to see the committee focusing on our nation’s growing obesity and chronic disease challenges.

The Health & Fitness Association is the leading trade association dedicated to enhancing mental and physical health in the United States by increasing access to physical activity. Our organization represents over 55,000 health and fitness businesses, which contribute over \$22 billion to the economy each year and employ more than 434,000 workers. Most importantly, our members help patrons live healthier lives, strengthening immune systems, increasing productivity, and enhancing overall happiness, all of which lead to positive public policy outcomes such as the reduction of overall healthcare costs.

We recognize and support the potential of GLP-1 weight loss drugs as a tool to significantly impact public health. Extending Medicare coverage for these medications can help address a major health crisis affecting millions of Americans and leading to numerous chronic conditions, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

At the same time, it is essential to understand that the success of GLP-1 medications is maximized when combined with comprehensive lifestyle changes. Structured exercise, healthy eating habits, and behavioral support are indispensable components of a successful weight management strategy. We urge Congress to view the expansion of Medicare coverage for GLP-1 drugs not as an isolated solution but as part of a broader, integrated approach to health and wellness.

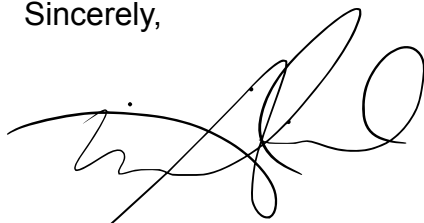
Our nation's diverse and robust health and fitness industry plays a crucial role in supporting these lifestyle changes. Encouraging partnerships between healthcare providers and the health and fitness industry can create a support network fostering long-term healthy habits. This holistic approach will enhance the effectiveness of GLP-1 medications and promote overall well-being, reducing the long-term need for medication while ensuring long-term healthy lifestyles.

Furthermore, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of Medicare supplemental benefits that offer reduced or no-cost physical activity for seniors. These benefits ensure that older adults have access to essential exercise opportunities, which are vital for maintaining mobility, strength, and overall health. Integrating these supplemental benefits with GLP-1 medication coverage can provide a comprehensive support system for seniors, promoting sustained health improvements and quality of life.

We believe that by recognizing the complementary role of lifestyle interventions alongside pharmaceutical treatments, we can help individuals achieve lasting health improvements. This dual approach ensures that Medicare beneficiaries receive comprehensive care that addresses the root causes of obesity and supports sustained health outcomes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to advancing the health and well-being of our country. We look forward to working with you to ensure that we not only provide access to breakthrough medical treatments but also invest in the necessary support systems that empower individuals to lead healthier lives. Together, we can create a healthcare framework that truly meets the needs of our citizens and sets them on a path to long-term wellness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Goscinski', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mike Goscinski  
Vice President of Government Affairs  
Health & Fitness Association

Cc: Members of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee