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May 15, 2023

ATTN: Members of the Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments to the Utah Department of Health and Human Services, Pharmacy and Therapeutics (P&T) Committee. We appreciate that the P&T Committee will be including anti-obesity medications (AOMs) on the May 2023 meeting agenda. We strongly encourage the Committee to include this class of FDA-approved medications on your Medicaid Preferred Drug List Program.

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is the largest national non-profit organization, with over 75,000 members, dedicated to supporting and advocating for individuals living with obesity, including 4,116 members in Utah. The state of Utah does not escape the effects and impact of obesity where 31% of the population lives with the disease. The P&T Committee has the opportunity to update Medicaid benefits to meet clinical standards, by adding coverage for anti-obesity treatments.

Evidence clearly demonstrates how AOMs improve health outcomes and quality of life for people living with obesity. As you know, obesity is a serious chronic disease that requires treatment and management just like diabetes, cancer, or high blood pressure. Obesity is not a matter of personal choice or moral deficiency. Obesity is often the root cause and driver of other health complications. A recent report found that treating obesity can reduce diabetes (-8.9%), hypertension (-2.3%), heart disease (-2.6%), cancer (-1.3%), and disability (-4.7%) over 10 years in private insurance coverage and Medicare.<sup>1</sup> The same assumption can be applied to Medicaid programs.

Recent clinical guidelines recommend the use of AOMs. The American Diabetes Association's 2023 Standards of Care<sup>2</sup> stated the importance of both glycemic control and obesity treatment with AOMs. The American Gastroenterological Association's obesity management guidelines for adults also recommended the use of AOMs.<sup>3</sup> In addition, a wealth of evidence demonstrates that treating obesity improves associated complications, like type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and dyslipidemia, among others.

We do applaud the P&T Committee for including anti-obesity treatments on their agenda for review and strongly encourage a positive vote for inclusion of these medications on the Medicaid Preferred Drug List. Ensuring that obesity is treated in the same fashion as other chronic diseases will ensure that

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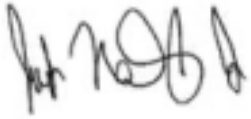
<sup>1</sup> Benefits of Medicare Coverage for Weight Loss Drugs. By Alison Sexton Ward, PhD, Bryan Tysinger, PhD, PhuongGiang Nguyen, Dana Goldman, PhD and Darius Lakdawalla, PhD. USC Schaeffer, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> American Diabetes Association. *Diabetes Care* 2022;45(Supplement\_1):S113-S124. <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc22-S008>

<sup>3</sup> American Gastroenterological Association. [https://www.gastrojournal.org/article/S0016-5085\(22\)01026-5/fulltext](https://www.gastrojournal.org/article/S0016-5085(22)01026-5/fulltext)

Medicaid recipients in Utah have access to comprehensive evidence-based treatment avenues for addressing this complex and chronic disease. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact us or Chris Gallagher via email at [chris@potomaccurrents.com](mailto:chris@potomaccurrents.com) or by telephone at 571-235-6475. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Joe Nadglowski  
President and CEO  
Obesity Action Coalition