



March 12, 2025

**OAC, OMA, TOS and ASMBS Joint Comments  
regarding Connecticut Department of Social Services'  
proposed SPA 25-0014 Pharmacy Obesity Weight Loss Drug Coverage**

On behalf of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), Obesity Medicine Association (OMA), American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) and The Obesity Society (TOS), we would like to express our opposition to the Department of Social Services' (DSS) proposed Medicaid State Plan Amendment (SPA) to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that would limit Medicaid coverage to the generic medications Phentermine (FDA-approved in 1959) and Orlistat/Xenical – also FDA-approved during the previous century in 1999. With recent safe and effective FDA-approved medications available, it is unethical to prohibit access to life-changing and life-saving treatments.

We find DSS's proposed SPA problematic given that the Connecticut General Assembly has already approved, and Governor Lamont signed into law Public Act No. 23-94 -- policy that already provides coverage for all FDA-approved obesity medications for state Medicaid beneficiaries effective July 1, 2023. However, despite this legislative mandate, DSS has not yet implemented coverage for these critical medications – more than 20 months after the law took effect. While it is certainly appropriate for the department to express its opinions during the legislative process on proposed legislation, it is not acceptable to ignore the will of the legislature and Governor who approved the law.

The through line of DSS's inaction throughout the last 20 months and its newly proposed SPA seem to indicate that state policymakers are applying a double standard when providing Medicaid beneficiaries access to the latest and most-effective obesity treatment avenues compared to those for patients with other chronic disease states such as diabetes, heart disease or cancer. Think of limiting patients with Type 2 diabetes to only Metformin or only Hydrochlorothiazide for patients with heart disease... or Methotrexate for all cancer patients. Such an approach would be met with outrage, yet policymakers seem fine with such a strategy for patients with obesity.

As a nation, we must stop evaluating coverage of obesity care through a cost-only lens. This approach is rooted in bias and is unethical. The goal of healthcare is not to save money but improve the health and well-being of people. Our organizations are adamantly opposed to DSS's proposed SPA and urge the agency to follow the 2023 law and open up access to all FDA-approved obesity medications.

For more information, please contact Obesity Action Coalition Policy Advisor Chris Gallagher@[chris@potomaccurrents.com](mailto:chris@potomaccurrents.com). Thank you.