



4511 North Himes Ave., Suite 250
Tampa, FL 33614

(800) 717-3117
(813) 872-7835
Fax: (813) 873-7838

info@obesityaction.org
www.ObesityAction.org

June 24, 2026

Attention: James D. McLain, MHA, FACHE – Executive Director (CEO)
Dr. Andreea Anton, MD – Chief of Staff (Medical Director equivalent)
Kimberly Bell, PharmD – Chief of Pharmacy (Pharmacy Director)

I am contacting you today on behalf of the more than 95,000 members of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) and the 100 million people with obesity across the United States, to urge the VA Milwaukee Healthcare System to align its obesity care coverage policy with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DOD) 2025 Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG) for the Management of Adult Overweight and Obesity.

The OAC is the leading national non-profit dedicated to serving people living with obesity through awareness, support, education and advocacy. Our vision is to create a society where all individuals are treated with respect and without discrimination or bias regardless of their size or weight.

It has come to our attention that the VA Milwaukee Healthcare System is utilizing an overly restrictive coverage policy surrounding access to Food & Drug Administration (FDA) - approved obesity medications (OMs), where a patient must meet one of the following criteria:

- Tier 1a: Patients with life-threatening weight-related condition or experiencing treatment delay for a life-threatening condition due to excess weight for whom treatment delay would likely increase mortality risk within the next year.
- Tier 1b: Patients who are 45 years old or more with established cardiovascular disease (defined as hx MI, PCI, stroke, or symptomatic PAD) and BMI of 27 or more.
- Patients who require additional weight loss to qualify for bariatric surgery participating in prebariatric MOVE!
- Tier 2A: BMI>40 and patients with at least three weight-related conditions **OR** BMI>40 and Heart Failure with Preserved Ejection Fraction (HFpEF)

In announcing this new coverage policy, the Milwaukee VA cites that all GLP-1s are currently on the "scarce resource list" (due to demand, supply shortage, or high cost)." While many of these issues may have been true two years ago, the landscape has changed throughout the last 12 months. For example, the FDA removed tirzepatide and Wegovy from its drug shortage list in December of 2025 and February 2026, respectively. In addition, pricing for both medications have been significantly reduced since the beginning of the year.

Given these facts, OAC is hopeful that the Milwaukee VA will remove GLP-1s from its scarce resource list and align its local coverage with 2025 VA/DOD CPG for the Management of Adult Overweight and Obesity, which allows coverage for those with documented participation in a comprehensive lifestyle intervention and a BMI that is greater than or equal to 30 kg/m² with at least one weight-related comorbidity.

Regardless of setting, any patient in the VA and DOD healthcare system should ideally have access to the interventions that are recommended in this guideline after taking into consideration the patient's specific circumstances. This CPG is designed to assist providers in managing or co-managing patients with overweight or obesity. Moreover, the patient population of interest for this CPG is adult with overweight or obesity who are eligible for care in the VA and DOD healthcare delivery systems including those who are in the community.



4511 North Himes Ave., Suite 250
Tampa, FL 33614

(800) 717-3117
(813) 872-7835
Fax: (813) 873-7838

info@obesityaction.org
www.ObesityAction.org

receiving care from community-based clinicians. It includes Veterans as well as deployed and non-deployed active-duty Service, Guard, and Reserve Members and their adult dependents.

Alignment of local and national coverage is critical as guideline recommendations are intended to support the delivery of evidence-based, patient-centered healthcare, which occurs at the intersection of best available evidence, patient preference, and practitioner expertise and experience.

In this vein, we are also concerned that even some of the current restricted coverage criteria may exacerbate health inequities, perpetuate bias and could delay critical treatment. For example, the Milwaukee VA should remove the age limit of 45 years old for coverage. There are some patients who are experiencing cardiovascular disease younger than 45 years old that could also benefit if the minimum age was reduced to include all adults. Additionally, this criterion is not in keeping with the FDA indication for use and not only would penalize veterans who were unfortunate enough to have developed cardiovascular disease before the age of 45 but also could create confusion among healthcare providers and patients about coverage criteria.

Finally, it is important to note that a 2023 study on the [“Clinical and Cost Benefits of Anti-Obesity Medication for US Veterans Participating in the MOVE! Weight Management Program”](#) provides strong real-world evidence that combining obesity medications with the VA's MOVE! behavioral weight-management program produces substantially better outcomes than behavioral treatment alone. Veterans receiving obesity medications achieved greater weight loss, better cardiometabolic health, fewer hospitalizations and emergency department visits, and nearly \$1,900 lower annual medical costs per patient. The findings support broader integration of obesity pharmacotherapy into Veteran healthcare and reinforce the value of treating obesity as a chronic disease requiring both behavioral and medical interventions.

In closing, we urge the VA Milwaukee Healthcare System to align its obesity care coverage policy with the 2025 Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Adult Overweight and Obesity. Failure to do so will result in local veterans being forced to pay thousands of dollars out of pocket for obesity care that has been nationally recognized by the DOD and VA as essential and medically necessary care.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact OAC Policy Consultant Chris Gallagher at chris@potomaccurrents.com. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski", is written over a light blue circular background.

Joseph Nadglowski, Jr.
OAC President and CEO