

Amplifying weight-loss medications

How personalization and behavior change are key to your weight-loss benefits strategy

The latest generation of weight-loss medications has received a lot of press due to an average of 15-20% one-year weight-loss efficacy with good safety profiles.¹ Combine this with the surge in obesity rates and stress-related weight gain, and demand for these drugs has gone through the roof. Yet, to get the most out of these medications, employers have a few obstacles to navigate—the volume of different types of medications, addressing underlying behaviors that contribute to obesity, and the shortage of experienced weight-loss providers.



"It's important to remember that many individuals considering weight-loss medications have already tried—sometimes for years—to lose weight. But these medications are not 'set and forget'—the data is clear that adding a strong behavioral program and a personalized prescriptive approach can transform the health and well-being of the participant while significantly lowering the cost for the payer."

- **Tim Church, MD, PHD, MPH**, Chief Medical Officer, Wondr Health



The 'silver bullet' conundrum

Weight-loss medications may seem like a miracle drug, but as the saying goes, when something seems too good to be true, it often is. There are multiple barriers to thorough care for people considering these weight-loss medications:



No single drug is a magic solution.

There are many FDA-approved weight-loss medications currently in the market with many more on the horizon.

Each of these medications differ in not only cost but how they work. Understanding each individual's motivations and needs is key to prescribing the most effective medication.



Employers have questions on cost.

Employers are weighing the potential benefits of the reduced risk of obesity-related disease against the upfront cost of weight-loss medications. While some older medications are relatively low cost, the newer and more effective variants are quite expensive. Additionally, these new weight-loss medications are indicated for long-term chronic weight management—upping the cost even more.



Weight-loss medications aren't as effective when used alone.

These medications may address the scale, but they don't address lifestyle, behaviors, or motivations. An unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, and stress can all contribute to obesity and, therefore, should be addressed for better and more sustainable results. Individuals who receive tailored treatment based on their needs achieve greater weight loss, and pairing weight-loss medications with behavior change support is significantly more effective at sustained weight loss than taking these medications alone.²



Lack of weight-loss certified experts.

Currently, there are limited number of providers certified by the American Board of Obesity Medicine.³ For every one certified obesity medicine physician, there are more than 20,000 people with obesity.⁴ In comparison, there are over 202,000 primary care physicians and 33,000 cardiologists.⁵ Not only is there a shortage in the number of certified obesity medicine physicians, but there is a lack of depth in training and support staff.

Three steps to maximize your weight-loss medications strategy

For organizations that cover weight-loss medications, there are ways to stay ahead of the curve in achieving long-term clinical outcomes.



Get a good prescribing partner.

Work with an experienced provider that is able to tailor the medication to the patient to promote better outcomes and cost containment.



Find a world-class behavioral change program.

Behavioral change support means better clinical outcomes. And it's a two-fold solution—it can be used as both an alternative for those who don't qualify and to support weight-loss medication management for those who do.



Data, data & data.

Does your solution track the outcomes to give you valuable insights and ROI? Are you getting what you are paying for? You should feel confident in both clinical outcomes and cost savings.

Employer takeaways

1

Tailored medication is the future.

Your people are unique—with different eating behaviors, lifestyles, and motivations. Shouldn't their solution be just as tailored? Each of these medications addresses weight-loss differently—whether it's between-meal satiety, emotional eating, or more. But the sheer volume of different options can be overwhelming. Experts who can match the most effective medication to an individual's circumstances will achieve better results.

2

Addressing behavioral change is key.

While weight-loss medications are game changers, they don't address underlying behaviors that can lead to weight gain. Research shows that weight-loss medications are more effective when paired with a behavioral change program, leading to more weight-loss, improved physical health, and increased quality of life.² Including a wellness solution that helps people build skills for diet, physical activity, stress reduction, and sleep provides a solid foundation

3

There are not enough weight-loss experts.

Demand for weight-loss medications is already high and expected to grow by 15% annually over the next five years.⁶ But there is a shortage of experienced weight-loss providers and lack of prescribing experience—especially for tailoring medication. It helps to know what to look for: Experienced providers that prescribe medications based on the individual and support a whole-health approach addressing behavior, physical activity, and nutrition will achieve better results.

Behavioral change programs aren't a nice-to-have, they are a must-have.

Behavioral change programs, like Wondr, can make or break outcomes achieved by weight-loss medications. Adding these programs increases weight loss with even longer-lasting results and improves quality of life. For employers, this means happier and healthier people—and a healthier and more productive workforce.

Introducing Wondr Advanced

An advanced obesity solution to optimize outcomes and control costs.

Wondr Advanced brings industry-leading expertise to help organizations navigate the complexities of obesity and weight-loss medications for their population.

[Learn more at go.wondrhealth.com/wondr-advanced](https://go.wondrhealth.com/wondr-advanced)



¹Lundgren JR, et al. Healthy Weight Loss Maintenance with Exercise, Liraglutide, or Both Combined. *N Engl J Med*.

²Höchstmann C, et al. Association between weight loss, change in physical activity, and change in quality of life following a corporately sponsored, online weight loss program. *BMC Public Health*.

³American Board of Obesity Medicine

⁴Hales CM, et al. Prevalence of obesity and severe obesity among adults: United States, 2017–2018.

⁵NCHS Data Brief, no 360.

⁶Association of American Medical Colleges