



## Navigating the Landscape of Semaglutide and Other Weight Loss Drugs

Flip on the television, and you're likely to encounter a barrage of advertisements touting the latest weight loss miracle drugs. Semaglutides, a class of medications within the GLP-1 category, have recently taken center stage.

We find ourselves amidst what could be dubbed the golden age of weight loss miracle drugs, with semaglutides at the forefront of the conversation. These drugs work by increasing insulin levels, thereby lowering blood sugar, and targeting the brain's appetite-regulating center. The promise of dramatic weight loss has captured the attention of many, leading to FDA approvals for drugs like Wegovy for weight loss and Ozempic for diabetes management.

### CONTACT

To learn more about how Amwins can help you place coverage for your clients, reach out to your local Amwins broker.

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## Patient concerns

However, amidst the hype, there are significant patient concerns that warrant attention. The lack of availability due to high demand as well as the high cost of name-brand drugs have led some individuals to seek alternatives from compounding pharmacies.

Salt formulations may be found in compounded versions such as semaglutide sodium or semaglutide acetate. FDA warnings highlight the risks of heart and kidney damage associated with these salt forms, particularly for those with conditions like high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease which are often associated with being overweight.

Unfortunately, compounded formulations may lack the same active ingredients as FDA-approved semaglutides, posing potential efficacy issues for patients. Moreover, compounded medications raise concerns about potential drug interactions for patients who may be simultaneously taking other medications. Self-administration of compounded versions further heightens the risks, as patients may be prone to errors in dosage, potentially leading to adverse side effects or overdoses.

Furthermore, sustaining weight loss with these drugs requires long-term commitment, raising questions about the nature of the patient-provider relationship. Telemedicine services, often used for weight loss consultations, may contribute to a lack of personal connection between patients and healthcare providers.



## Potential legal issues

The rise of semaglutide drugs also brings forth a host of potential legal issues. False advertising claims may arise if patients fail to achieve or maintain weight loss as promised. Improper screening of patients, particularly in the context of telemedicine or medi-spas, could lead to allegations of negligence.

Concerns about drug interactions and adverse effects further compound the legal risks. Class action lawsuits, akin to those seen in the opioid crisis or the Fen-phen debacle of the late 1990s, loom large, prompting carriers to consider exclusions for such claims.

## Market response

In response to these challenges, insurance markets are grappling with how to mitigate their risks effectively. There's no one-size-fits-all approach; each market is navigating the landscape differently. Underwriters are scrutinizing the prescription of semaglutides and other weight loss drugs. Many carriers have exclusions for non-FDA approved treatments which could automatically exclude prescription of compounded semaglutides and off-label use of semaglutides that are FDA approved for other uses such as diabetes management. Underwriters are particularly concerned with prescriptions that are compounded with sodium formations, and assessing the nature of the patient-provider relationship. Many insurance policies now explicitly exclude compounded semaglutides or those containing sodium or acetate.

Class action and administrative proceedings exclusions are becoming commonplace, reflecting carriers' concerns about potential liabilities. Some insurers may offer sub-limits for these risks with stringent controls in place.



## Takeaway

As semaglutides continue to reshape the weight loss landscape, it's imperative for stakeholders to tread carefully. Whether you're a patient seeking treatment, a healthcare provider prescribing medications or an insurer underwriting policies, navigating the complexities of semaglutide drugs requires diligence and expertise.

Working with a knowledgeable broker who understands the nuances of this evolving market can make all the difference. By staying informed and proactive, we can help ensure that the promise of semaglutides translates into safe and effective weight loss solutions.

## We help you win

Amwins is a leading professional liability insurance broker specializing in financial, professional and management risks. Our experts across the country, and around the world, collaborate to deliver the right solution for your clients.

Amwins mobilizes hundreds of healthcare insurance specialists across the country to place property, casualty, professional lines and group benefits coverages for a variety of classes and employer groups. Through our longstanding commitment to the healthcare industry, we've forged significant relationships with top-tier, specialty carriers and have even developed exclusive products that address your clients' needs.

Help your clients operate confidently with the expertise of Amwins on your side. Contact a broker today.

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