



## PRESS STATEMENT

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### **ITEM Coalition Hails Major Win as Medicare & Medicaid Expand Coverage of Anti-Obesity Medications**

**Washington, D.C., November 6, 2025** – Today, the Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid (“ITEM”) Coalition (<https://itemcoalition.org/>), a national consumer- and clinician-led group of nonprofit associations advocating for access to and coverage of assistive devices and technologies, applauds the Trump Administration’s major decision to expand coverage of anti-obesity medications for the treatment of obesity under the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

In recognizing the impact that anti-obesity medications can have on limb loss and disability status, this issue was spearheaded by the National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics and Prosthetics (“NAAOP”), an ITEM Coalition member. The ITEM Coalition has prioritized support for this coverage expansion since it was originally proposed in November 2024 by the Biden Administration.

This landmark decision by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (“CMS”) signifies a long-overdue recognition that obesity is a chronic, serious medical condition—not a cosmetic issue—and that access to effective medications—in combination with a healthy diet and exercise—provides a valuable clinical tool to improve health and functional outcomes and supports independence for beneficiaries with mobility disabilities.

The expansion of anti-obesity medication coverage under the Medicare and Medicaid programs is coupled with a dramatic reduction in cost-sharing for beneficiaries, making these drugs more affordable for millions of beneficiaries who previously faced out-of-pocket costs exceeding \$1,000 per month. For many people with disabilities and mobility impairments, maintaining a healthy weight through traditional means such as diet and exercise is often very difficult due to their physical limitations, lack of coverage of activity-specific assistive devices, and widespread inaccessibility of fitness facilities.

“Today’s announcement marks a new chapter in federal healthcare policy,” said Peter W. Thomas, J.D., Co-Coordinator of the ITEM Coalition. “For too long, people living with obesity—especially those with disabilities, mobility impairments, limb loss, and other chronic conditions—have been denied access to anti-obesity medications to help fight this condition. We

are thrilled to see Medicare and Medicaid recognize expanded coverage and look forward to working with these programs to ensure appropriate access to patient care.”

Obesity is a leading risk factor for numerous serious health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke, certain cancers, and mobility impairment. Studies demonstrate that it disproportionately impacts people with disabilities and low-income individuals who are more likely to rely on Medicare and Medicaid. Under current CMS policy, anti-obesity medications are only covered for individuals with cardio-vascular disease or diabetes, not for weight management only. The ITEM Coalition and its member organizations believe that anti-obesity medications are an important tool, particularly for people at risk of—or who have already experienced—limb loss, and those with other mobility disabilities. Today’s decision acknowledges this reality and dramatically advances treatment of this condition.

By expanding coverage of anti-obesity medications under the Medicare and Medicaid programs, the Administration is advancing the principles of independence and function that are central to the ITEM Coalition’s mission. As the ITEM Coalition has consistently emphasized, coverage of anti-obesity medications is not simply about managing weight—it is about restoring function and enabling individuals, especially in the disability community, to live full and independent lives.

“Modern medicine recognizes obesity as a treatable chronic disease,” stated Michael Barnett, J.D., Co-Coordinator of the ITEM Coalition, “and this decision ensures that millions of Americans—particularly people with disabilities and those with limited mobility—will have access to the full range of evidence-based therapies they need to improve their health and independence.”

While final details of the policy’s implementation are forthcoming, this coverage expansion is a major step forward. The ITEM Coalition thanks its members for their support and will continue working with the NAAOP to monitor the development of coverage policy as this decision is implemented in both Medicare and Medicaid, and will seek to expand access in the private insurance market as well. The ITEM Coalition will work closely with the Administration, state Medicaid programs, Medicare Advantage and Part D plans, providers, and other stakeholders to ensure smooth implementation, clinical access, and broad awareness of this coverage expansion. We will also monitor outcomes, promote best practices, and advocate for continued strengthening of coverage policy—especially for individuals with disabilities or mobility impairments for whom obesity treatment is key to maintaining functional independence.

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