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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO DRUGS FOR WEIGHT LOSS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that glucagon-like  
2 peptide-1 drugs, commonly known as GLP-1 drugs, have been used  
3 for decades as an effective treatment for type 2 diabetes  
4 mellitus, and drug insurance policies generally provide coverage  
5 for these medications when prescribed for that purpose. In  
6 recent years, GLP-1 drugs have also gained significant attention  
7 for their effectiveness in treating obesity. However, due to  
8 their high cost, insurance coverage for GLP-1 drugs prescribed  
9 for obesity remains relatively limited in Hawaii. In addition,  
10 while state medicaid programs must cover nearly all drugs  
11 approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for  
12 medically accepted indications, a long-standing statutory  
13 exception under 42 United States Code section 1396r-8(d)(2)(A)  
14 allows states to choose whether to provide medicaid coverage for  
15 weight-loss drugs for adults. As a result, although the United  
16 States Food and Drug Administration has approved the GLP-1 drugs  
17 Saxenda (liraglutide), Wegovy (semaglutide), and Zepbound



1 (tirzepatide) for purposes of weight loss, the department of  
2 human services has opted to exclude these medications from  
3 coverage under medicaid in most situations.

4 The legislature believes that GLP-1 drugs should be covered  
5 for weight loss purposes, because GLP-1 drugs are effective for  
6 addressing obesity, a major health issue linked to diabetes,  
7 heart disease, and other conditions. Addressing one of the  
8 major contributors to disease will help lower overall health  
9 care costs for everyone.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
11 department of human services to remove the coverage exclusion  
12 for glucagon-like peptide-1 drugs that have been approved by the  
13 United States Food and Drug Administration for weight loss  
14 purposes, thereby allowing medicaid coverage for certain  
15 glucagon-like peptide-1 drugs to treat obesity.

16 SECTION 2. (a) No later than August 1, 2026, the  
17 department of human services shall issue temporary rules without  
18 regard to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to effectuate  
19 subsection (c). The temporary rules shall be effective until  
20 amended or superseded by the rules adopted under subsection (b).



1 (b) No later than January 1, 2028, the department of human  
2 services shall adopt rules under chapter 91, Hawaii Revised  
3 Statutes, to effectuate subsection (c).

4 (c) Any patient who is a medicaid prescription drug  
5 program recipient shall be eligible for coverage of glucagon-  
6 like peptide-1 drugs as agents when used for weight loss;  
7 provided that:

8 (1) The glucagon-like peptide-1 drug is approved by the  
9 United States Food and Drug Administration for  
10 purposes of weight loss;

11 (2) The glucagon-like peptide-1 drug is prescribed by a  
12 practitioner;

13 (3) The patient participates in a lifestyle change program  
14 that supports long-term weight loss maintenance; and

15 (4) Prior authorization shall not be required.

16 For purposes of this Act, "practitioner" shall have the  
17 same meaning as in section 461-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

18 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much  
20 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for



1    medicaid coverage of glucagon-like peptide-1 drugs as agents for  
2    weight loss.

3            The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
4    human services for the purposes of this Act.

5            SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.



**Report Title:**

DHS; Weight Loss; Obesity; Medicaid; GLP-1; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Human Services to provide Medicaid prescription drug program recipients with coverage of glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) drugs for weight loss. Appropriates funds. (HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

