



Weight Care *is* Healthcare

# What the Evolving Weight Health Landscape Means for Your Organization

WeightWatchers.  
for Business

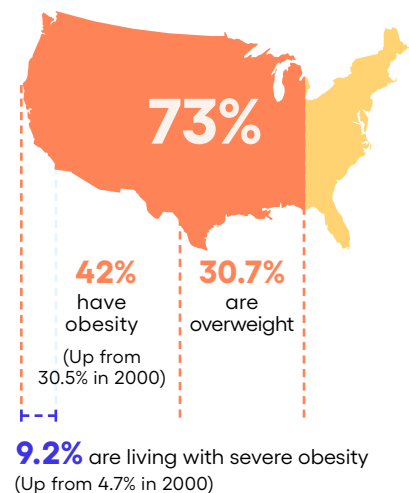


With nearly three in four adults in the U.S. living with overweight or obesity,<sup>1</sup> the implications of weight health are becoming better understood and prioritized. Today, obesity is recognized as a complex chronic condition with far-reaching health consequences, including increased risk of heart disease, diabetes, and certain cancers.<sup>2</sup> In tandem with the advancing science, growing evidence demonstrates the significant impact comprehensive weight care can have on overall health and well-being, including reducing the risk of obesity-related comorbidities and preventing disease progression.<sup>3</sup>

Simply put, weight care is healthcare. Employers and health plans are at the forefront, leading the change in awareness and prioritizing proactive care. The shift to weight healthcare, encompassing **behavioral, clinical, and community care**, positively impacts overall health by reducing the burden of obesity-related chronic diseases, improving quality of life, and lowering healthcare costs.

## The obesity epidemic in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

**U.S. adults (age 20+) living with overweight or obesity:\***



\*Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or higher. Severe obesity is defined as having a BMI of 40.0 or higher.

## This report explores:

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# The weight-health connection

Advancing science proves that reducing overweight and obesity isn't solely a matter of willpower. Weight is driven by a complex combination of genetic, environmental, and behavioral factors, often making overweight and obesity difficult to manage and treat.

As a result, there's no one-size-fits-all cure or quick fix. Like other chronic diseases, managing overweight and obesity requires a long-term approach that combines lifestyle changes, behavior change, community support, and, for some, medications.

## How weight impacts health

Left unmanaged, overweight and obesity lead to a higher risk of associated health conditions and increased healthcare costs.

### Chronic conditions associated with overweight and obesity:<sup>2</sup>

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disease (heart disease, stroke)
- Certain cancers
  - In Men: Colon, rectum, and prostate
  - In Women: Breast, uterus, and gallbladder
- Fatty liver diseases
- Gallbladder disease
- Kidney disease
- Metabolic syndrome
- Osteoarthritis
- Sleep apnea
- Gout
- Mental health problems, including increased risk of depression
- Respiratory problems, such as asthma
- Reproductive health issues, including fertility and increased risks during pregnancy



**Losing even a small amount of weight has a positive impact on overall health** and helps to reduce the medical complications that can occur for individuals living with obesity.<sup>3</sup> For example, weight management and weight loss help reduce blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and blood glucose levels, which are major risk factors for cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes.



# The benefits of weight care as healthcare

In the evolving weight health landscape, weight care has moved beyond wellness perks and programs to become an integral component of whole-person healthcare. The recognition of obesity as a chronic condition facilitates acceptance and insurance coverage for evidence-based treatments, including behavioral therapy, weight-loss medications, and bariatric surgery.

At the highest level, providing fully covered benefits that treat obesity as a chronic condition acknowledges the complex biological and societal factors behind the obesity epidemic. Overall, health plans can be a catalyst for improving access to science-backed treatments while employers facilitate utilization and provide essential behavioral tools and support that help ensure sustainable results.



Adopting a holistic approach to weight healthcare enables optimized benefit strategies that work for both employers and employees. The spectrum of treatment options can be tailored to meet diverse weight health needs across a given workforce population, including employees, spouses, and dependents. Access to weight healthcare benefits helps to improve weight health, prevent the onset of chronic conditions, manage a condition that already exists, and sustain weight health results over time.

## The impact – and cost implications – of GLP-1 medications



### New Treatment Options

In recent years, advances in glucagon-like-peptide 1-agonist medications (GLP-1s) have introduced an effective new option for treating obesity. These hormone-based medications fill a gap between traditional obesity medications and surgical solutions.



### Game-Changing Results

“First-generation” GLP-1 medications, initially focused on treating diabetes, produced weight-loss results of 8% in clinical trials.<sup>4</sup> The second generation of GLP-1s, approved for treating obesity, are producing weight-loss amounts up to 21%.<sup>4</sup> Along with significant weight loss, GLP-1s also improve health outcomes, including reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, improvements in sleep apnea, and enhanced quality of life.<sup>6</sup>



### Rapid Adoption

GLP-1 medications are a highly effective, game-changing clinical treatment for many individuals struggling with obesity. Utilization rates are increasing rapidly. A 2024 poll revealed that 12% of U.S. adults have used a GLP-1 medication.<sup>6</sup>

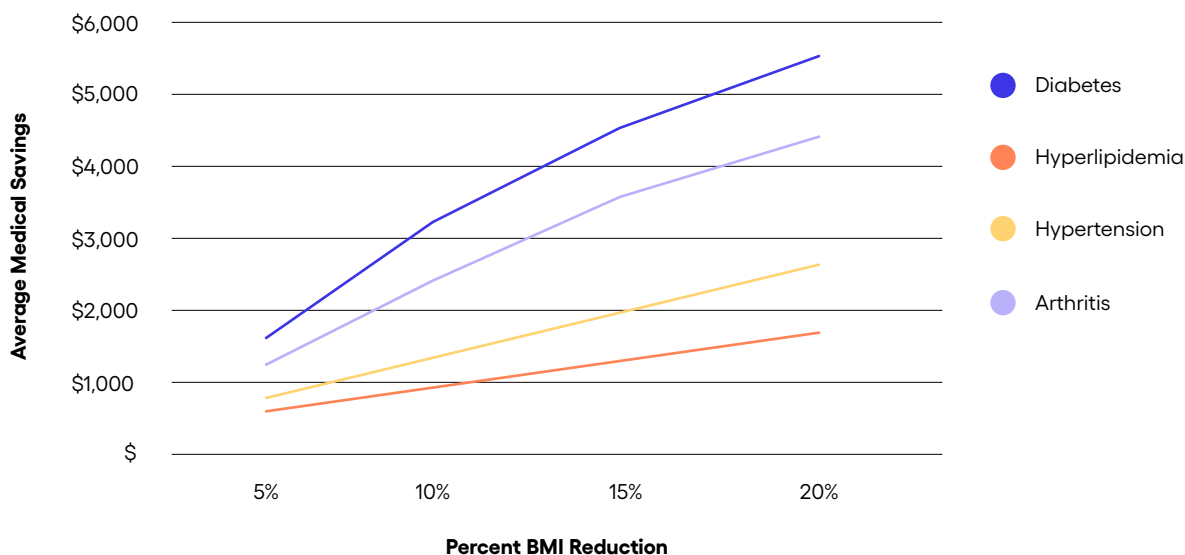


### Cost Management

The increasing demand and utilization have cost implications for employers and health plans. The decision to cover the medication costs requires an assessment of population needs and long-term return on investment. In addition, covered medication costs can be managed through utilization, eligibility, cost-sharing, and mandatory behavioral program integration strategies. More broadly, the Treat and Reduce Obesity Act (TROA) introduced by the House of Representatives includes provisions to cover weight-loss medications and intensive behavioral therapy.<sup>7</sup>

Access to quality weight healthcare through the workplace also helps to improve health outcomes and reduce long-term healthcare costs. When individuals with at least one chronic condition are able to lose weight and move from being obese to overweight, annual healthcare expenses are reduced by 20%.<sup>8</sup> Overall, research shows that weight loss is associated with significant reductions in both inpatient and outpatient healthcare costs. The corresponding savings are greater for individuals who start at a higher BMI.<sup>8</sup>

### Medical savings tied to weight loss<sup>8</sup>



For employers, the benefits of offering full-spectrum weight healthcare go beyond improved health outcomes and long-term cost savings. Employers can also realize savings through reduced costs related to absenteeism, disabilities, and worker's compensation.<sup>9</sup> In addition to hard costs, comprehensive weight healthcare benefits are an effective way for employers to demonstrate employee care, which helps to drive increased employee engagement, satisfaction, and loyalty. When employees are satisfied with their benefits, they are 1.6x more likely to be productive and 1.5x more likely to be loyal.<sup>10</sup>







## The benefits of weight care as healthcare



### Better health outcomes

With full-spectrum weight health programs, organizations are better equipped to address the root causes of weight-related health issues. Tackling the causes drives improved health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and enhanced productivity.



### Equitable access

A focus on whole-person health rather than weight loss makes programs more inclusive, accessible, and appealing to a wider range of people. Increased inclusivity can lead to higher participation rates, reduced risk of weight-related chronic conditions, and better overall health.



### Reduced stigma

A people-first approach helps reduce the bias and shame often associated with overweight and obesity, enabling organizations to create more supportive and psychologically safe environments.



For additional insights, explore **How WeightWatchers for Business is Leading the Shift to Weight Health**

# The value of full-spectrum weight care

Treating obesity as a chronic condition shifts the focus from weight lost to health gained. With that focus in mind, comprehensive weight care becomes weight healthcare. In this evolving landscape, employers and health plans have vital roles to play in expanding access to quality weight healthcare, improving health outcomes, and managing healthcare costs.

Across every workplace population, made up of employees, spouses/domestic partners, and dependent children, there are a range of weight health needs to address. Modern weight care benefits are thoughtful strategies that offer access to a full spectrum of weight health solutions, including behavioral, clinical, and community care, all with the flexibility to meet diverse needs.

Employee interest is high. A recent survey commissioned by WeightWatchers for Business revealed that 61% of consumers recognize obesity as a chronic condition, and 69% would like to have access to weight healthcare solutions in the workplace, including access to weight management support, behavior and lifestyle change programs, and prescription weight-loss drugs.<sup>11</sup>

A range of treatment options provides support along all types of weight health journeys, including tailored behavioral strategies for those taking or coming off GLP-1 medications. Full-spectrum access supports employees and their families in building and strengthening healthy habits, with ripple effects that go beyond weight.

## Interest in weight healthcare benefits is high.

**69%:** Consumers who would like their employer to offer weight health solutions.<sup>11</sup>



## Costs are a barrier to seeking care.

**51%:** Consumers who say costs affect their ability to access care.<sup>11</sup>



To explore the complete survey findings, download the report.

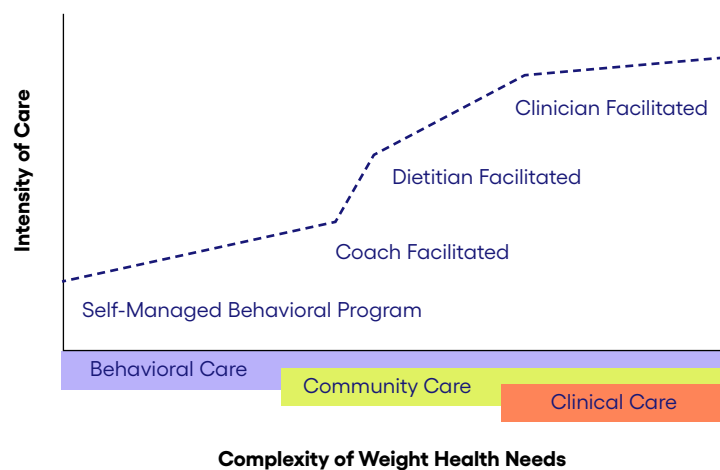


Research shows that a full-spectrum, personalized approach to weight health produces the best possible health outcomes. In a recent study, people who combined WeightWatchers virtual clinic and behavior change program achieved 11% more weight loss.<sup>12</sup> In addition, those who participated in the WeightWatchers Diabetes Program lowered their HbA1c by 0.75 at six months with a 5.7% average weight loss.<sup>13</sup>

Employers and health plans have the ability to make weight healthcare widely accessible while containing costs – and it can be done at scale. Employers can leverage their purchasing power to help increase access to quality care and reduce costs. By prioritizing weight management, health plans can contribute to healthier populations and more sustainable healthcare systems.

## The next step in weight health

WeightWatchers for Business is a trusted partner that provides integrated, whole-person weight healthcare across the full spectrum of behavioral, community, and clinical care. Working closely with employers and healthcare providers, we take a consultative approach to building long-term partnerships by tailoring solutions to match unique needs.



Our platform, built upon a science-proven and research-backed behavioral weight management program, helps to prevent and treat obesity plus other cardiometabolic conditions like diabetes. Across the full spectrum of weight care, we focus on helping our partners realize the benefits of improved weight health, which, in turn, may drive down utilization and associated costs.

Rather than fragmenting care, our platform individualizes the experience based on true clinical need.

- Full-spectrum, scalable, and science-proven behavior change programs, including Diabetes and GLP-1 Programs
- Virtual clinic and medication management
- 24x7 individualized coaching and highly active digital and IRL communities
- Integrated personal health

Let's talk about your organization's weight healthcare goals and how WeightWatchers for Business can help.  
[www.com/forbusiness](https://www.com/forbusiness)





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