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Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
Maine State Legislature  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

March 19, 2025

Testimony on LD 627, An Act to Require Insurance Coverage for Glucagon-like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonist Medication

Good afternoon Chairwoman Bailey, Chairwoman Gramlich, and members of the Committee. My name is Jamie Whittemore and I am writing to you to testify in support of LD 627, An Act to Require Insurance Coverage for Glucagon-like Peptide-1 Receptor Agonist Medication.

In July 2022, the Maine Obesity Advisory Council (MAOC) cited a 31% rate of obesity in our state's adult population in its whitepaper "Preventing & Reducing Obesity in Maine: A Call to Action." With unbeknownst forethought, the MAOC called for policymakers to "strengthen federal and state food programs, improve infrastructure for physical activity, ensure comprehensive and affordable insurance coverage for obesity treatment, and invest in healthy children and families."<sup>1</sup> Today, you all have the opportunity to answer this call by affirming the importance of comprehensive and affordable coverage for the effective GLP-1 medications now available to treat and manage obesity.

In 2023 I chose to discuss starting a GLP-1 medication with my primary care provider after years of struggling with weight management and diagnosed obesity. My doctor was supportive of this and concurrently referred me to a weight and wellness center. I was grateful to receive access to a GLP-1 medication in April of 2023 which was at the time, covered by my insurance and did not require prior authorization. By July of 2023, I had finally, after years and years of trying diet after diet, lost over 30 pounds. I felt in control of my eating habits, I had more energy, I was sleeping better, I was more focused on my work, and in my personal life. Overall, I could not recall the last time that I had felt so good about myself or my health.

On September 7, 2023 my coverage for the GLP-1 medication was suddenly denied, citing a lack of "documented medical necessity." As a young woman, finally feeling in control of my health was so liberating. To have that abruptly taken away despite multiple doctors affirming my medical necessity, was heartbreaking. If passed, this law could change the lives of thousands of Mainers such as myself all across our state.

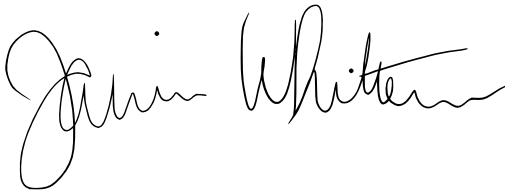
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.maineobesityadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Call-to-Action.Full-Report-Formatted.July-2022-FINAL.pdf?>

In the aftermath of the change in my coverage, I sought assistance appealing the denial and was repeatedly shut down. Between September 2023 and today, popularity and acceptance of GLP-1 medications for the treatment of obesity has skyrocketed. Unfortunately, insurance companies remain committed to excluding coverage for this type of medication, despite their benefits and rates of success. The fight against this type of discriminatory exclusion to medication coverage is ongoing, however this committee has an opportunity today to commit to the health and well-being of all Mainers by passing this bill.

If you have questions regarding my testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your time and attention. Please consider voting in support of LD 627.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie Whittemore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jamie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Whittemore".

Jamie Whittemore