



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Office of The Health Insurance Commissioner

Department of Business Regulation

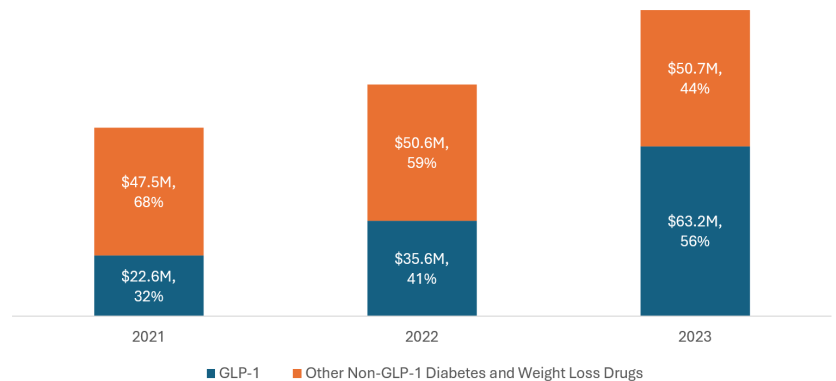
GLP-1s are Effective, but can Rhode Islanders Afford Them?

Rhode Islanders Spend a Lot on GLP-1s

Glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1s) agonists are diabetes medications that have become very popular due to their effectiveness in treating obesity.

- Nearly one in three Rhode Island residents was obese in 2023.¹
- Between 2021 and 2023, residents with commercial insurance spent **over \$120M**² on GLP-1s³ alone.
- In 2023, residents spent more on GLP-1s than all other medications to treat diabetes and obesity.

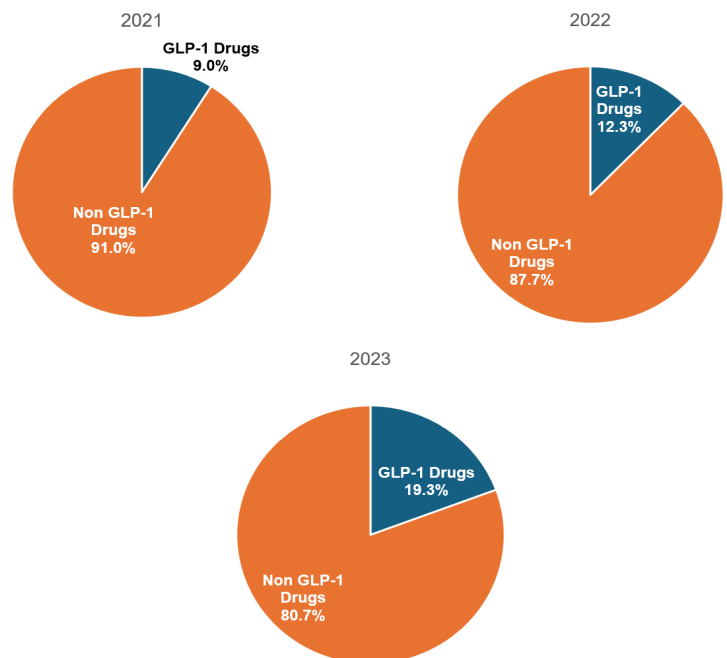
Total Spending on GLP-1 Drugs Compared to Other Drugs for Diabetes and Weight Loss, 2021-2023



Why do Rhode Island residents spend so much on GLP-1s?

- In 2023, GLP-1s made up 20% of total units for diabetes and obesity medications, but more than half the spending.
- These medications are **very expensive**. In 2023, the average payment for a 30-day supply of GLP-1s in Rhode Island ranged from \$850 to \$1,200.

Share of Units (GLP-1s vs. Non-GLP-1s)



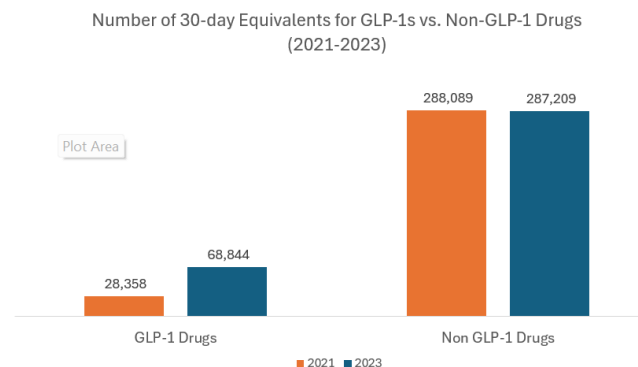
Why this Matters

- Due to high prices and increasing utilization, GLP-1s have quickly come a leading source of pharmacy spending. **Utilization of GLP-1s more than doubled between 2021 and 2023, while it remained relatively flat for non-GLP-1 drugs.**
- A recent study found that these drugs are not cost effective at their current net prices.⁴
- Because they are a long-term maintenance medication, and their use is expanding, they will be a major source of spending for years to come.
- When health care spending rises, premiums rise and deductible and copayments often increase, making care increasingly unaffordable for all.

Key Takeaways

GLP-1s are life-changing medications, but they may be prohibitively expensive.

- Obesity is a deadly disease, and people should be able to access life-changing medications.
- However, these medications may not be cost-effective at these current prices and are largely unavailable to people with lower incomes.
- It is important that Rhode Islanders to obtain the medications they need, but at prices that are reasonable.



Coming Soon: 2025 Chartbook & Cost Trends Public Forum

The Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner provides a deeper look into spending on GLP-1s in its 2025 chartbook. This report will be released during the RI Cost Trends public forum on May 12th, when OHIC also publishes results on 2023 performance against the cost growth target, quality measures, and public health and health equity measures.

1. <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/Obesity/RI>
2. OHIC's analysis of HealthFacts RI, which is the state's All-Payer Claims Database (APCD). Not all self-insured employers report their spending to the APCD.
3. There are eight GLP-1s included in this analysis: Mounjaro, Ozempic, Rybelsus, Saxenda, Semaglutide, Trulicity, Victoza, and Wegovy.
4. Hwang JH, Laiteerapong N, Huang ES, Kim DD. Lifetime Health Effects and Cost-Effectiveness of Tirzepatide and Semaglutide in US Adults. JAMA Health Forum. 2025;6(3):e245586. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2024.5586

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The Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner (OHIC) was established through legislation in 2004 to broaden the accountability of health insurers operating in Rhode Island. The Office is dedicated to: protecting consumers, encouraging fair treatment of medical service providers, ensuring solvency of health insurers, and improving the health care system's quality, accessibility, and affordability.