



American Diabetes Month

Diabetes affects roughly 37 million Americans yet there doesn't seem to be enough focus on taking action to prevent diabetes.

According to Mayo Clinic, the top 5 tips for taking control include: weight loss, physical activity, eating healthy plant-based foods, eating healthy fats, and skipping fad diets.

One popular fad diet is the Keto Diet. Although it works for many, it does not work for everyone nor is it appropriate for everyone!

Recently a health plan member engaged VezaHealth regarding a diagnosis of insulin resistance so she could better understand her diagnosis. After meeting with VezaHealth's preferred endocrinologist, she learned that for her the keto diet can negatively impact insulin resistance and actually lead to diabetes. Instead she was advised to eat a whole food plant-based diet with limited processed foods, and was provided with a wealth of other medically appropriate and dietary information.

"I finally feel like I have some answers and a way to manage my health and insulin resistance. The education from the Endocrinologist was eye opening and made me want to be in better shape and health" - RSO Participant/Health Plan Member

Finishing Life Well: Cori Zavada, J.D.

Caution! Weight loss GLP-1 medications are a lifelong commitment without lifestyle modifications!

Although they have been around for several years, the Glucagon-Like Peptide-1 (GLP-1) Receptor Agonists (GLP-1) are certainly center stage today. Eli Lilly's Zepbound (tirzepatide) was just approved by the FDA for chronic weight management. There is no doubt that obesity is a chronic disease that can result in serious health complications and comorbidities including heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

Although new weight management treatment options like Zepbound bring hope to many that have been struggling with obesity, health plans across the country are struggling with how to structure their benefits to address coverage issues surrounding the GLP-1 class of medications and patients are grappling with access issues.

Not all health plans are covering GLP-1 medications and the list price for these drugs can be budget straining. For those health plans that are covering GLP-1 medications, it is important to keep in mind that they do not 'cure' obesity and that without addressing the underlying cause and reinforcing lifestyle modifications patients will likely need to stay on the medication for the rest of their life.

In counseling health plans, I remind them that it is important to not only ensure patients use an interprofessional team of nurses, primary care providers, pharmacists, and endocrinologists, but to also implement a health coaching program to work with patients to address pertinent lifestyle modifications so patients (and health plans) are not beholden to these drugs for the rest of their life.

For some health plans we have designed and implemented plan specific health coaching criteria in to the pre-authorization process and I am elated that we are able to help patients across the country access these medication and make lifestyle modifications that are truly impacting the quality of their life forever.

Finish Life Well,

Cori



If VezaHealth is part of your health plan, we are available at no cost to you. If not, please have your HR Director contact us today!

The VezaHealth newsletter is not medical advice. Only seek medical advice from a qualified physician.