



# MEDIA RELEASE

May 30, 2022

## Joint statement from The Obesity Collective and Weight Issues Network on Ozempic supply shortages

Soaring demand and supply chain issues for a diabetes drug that has also shown significant weight loss benefits has reinforced the need for better healthcare support, including national clinical guidelines, to assist people with obesity.

Peak body obesity charities, the Obesity Collective and the Weight Issues Network, note the recent media and social media comments placing blame on people with obesity for shortages of the diabetes drug semaglutide (Ozempic).

Type 2 Diabetes is a serious illness affecting 1.8 million Australians and it is critical that these patients are able to access their prescribed medication.

However, it is important to clarify that this is a supply chain issue and people with obesity who have been using Ozempic have been doing so because their doctor has deemed it clinically important for their healthcare and has prescribed the medication.

While Ozempic is not currently indicated for the treatment of obesity in Australia, doctors are prescribing the medication to some patients with obesity as it can help people manage other important health issues such as heart and lung disease, arthritis, fatty liver disease, and PCOS, as examples.

This issue has served to highlight the complexities around treating obesity and its related complications, and the major barriers that exist to prevent many people from accessing the support they need to improve their health.

Obesity is a chronic, relapsing health condition, with many different drivers and causes - including social, genetic, biological, and environmental – and often diet and exercise alone may not be enough for management.

“The vast majority of people with obesity have made many attempts to manage their weight and complications that result from it, often unsuccessfully without help,” said Sydney endocrinologist, Dr Nic Kormas. “For them, not being able to access effective treatments to manage weight is a serious health issue.”

“The Ozempic shortage reinforces the pressing need for additional resources and support for healthcare professionals on how to assess, help and manage people with obesity.”

Professor Louise Baur, Chair of Child & Adolescent Health, University of Sydney and president elect of the World Obesity Federation, urged those engaging in public debate over the Ozempic shortages to resist apportioning blame to particular individuals or groups.

A [newly released report](#) published by University of Sydney researchers found that mass media played a significant role in perpetuating weight stigma with the

---

dominant discourse viewing obesity as an individual responsibility and overlooking systemic factors.

“It’s unfortunate that the Ozempic issue has brought out the latent weight bias that still so many people have,” said Professor Baur. “Stigma is a significant issue facing people with obesity and it can be a very destructive force.”

Dr. Divya Ramachandran PhD, Chair of the Weight Issues Network, an organisation that advocates for the needs of people affected by obesity, said it was difficult observing the extent of hate, judgement, and weight stigma, on display as a result of recent reporting.

“Those taking Ozempic have had it prescribed by their doctor for a whole cluster of health issues alongside their obesity”, she said.

“Please exercise compassion. Please do not place unfair blame or hate people when they are simply seeking healthcare for their health problems.”

**Media contact:** Rebecca Urban - [rebecca@theshapeagency.com.au](mailto:rebecca@theshapeagency.com.au)

More information is available on the Weight Issues Network [here](#) and Obesity Collective [here](#).



**THE OBESITY COLLECTIVE**

---