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15th November 2024

To: All Coventry and Warwickshire GP Practices

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Upcoming NICE TA on Tirzepatide for managing overweight and obesity

You may be aware of the upcoming NICE Technology Appraisal for Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) for use as a treatment for obesity. The draft recommendations are:

Tirzepatide is recommended as an option for managing overweight and obesity, alongside a reduced-calorie diet and increased physical activity, in adults, only if they have:

- ***an initial body mass index (BMI) of at least 35 kg/m² and***
- ***at least 1 weight-related comorbidity.***

Use lower BMI thresholds (usually reduced by 2.5 kg/m²) for people from South Asian, Chinese, other Asian, Middle Eastern, Black African or African-Caribbean ethnic backgrounds.

Whilst we welcome this novel treatment for obesity the predicted demand for this and other injectable weight loss drugs is likely to be extremely high given that 65% of adults in Coventry and Warwickshire are overweight or obese.

NHS England have recognised the likely demand for Tirzepatide and have proposed a phased introduction over an unprecedented twelve (12) years with the patients most in need being prioritised. In the first year this is likely to include patients with a BMI>40 and three or more obesity related comorbidities. NHS England are also making specific additional funding available that will include funding for additional lifestyle management services in addition to the drug costs. However, this funding has not been finalised and may take many months to be agreed.

Whilst the NICE TA recommends the possibility of prescribing and monitoring Tirzepatide in primary care we do not consider the current capacity in general practice to be sufficient to provide the additional lifestyle support that is recommended to accompany Tirzepatide. Therefore, we have concluded that a complete recommissioning of the obesity pathways in Coventry and Warwickshire is required to allow us to introduce these treatments in a fair, safe and sustainable way. This work will begin imminently but again will take many months to complete.

Remote or Private Providers

We are aware that at least one third party provider has established themselves as providing a remote service for the management of obesity and the prescribing of Tirzepatide and are promoting themselves via the Right to Choose pathway. These services are not integrated tier 3 and 4 services and as such **Coventry and Warwickshire ICB does not commission them** and clinicians should not refer patients to them on the NHS under Right to Choose.

Private clinicians who initiate Tirzepatide or other weight loss drugs are at liberty to do so but practices should not take over the prescribing of these medications on private clinics behalf since, again, they are unlikely to be integrated tier 3/4 services.

Summary

Coventry and Warwickshire ICB only commissions the provision of Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) for the management of obesity through an integrated tier 3 and 4 obesity service. In Coventry and Warwickshire this is via the usual UHCW obesity service.

General practice should not initiate or prescribe Tirzepatide (Mounjaro®) for the management of obesity until further notice.

We are writing to the local trusts to ensure that patients are not started on Tirzepatide without referral via the obesity services.

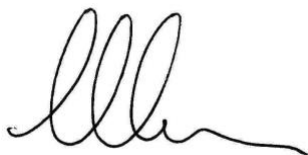
We are imminently starting a complete recommissioning of the obesity service in Coventry and Warwickshire to ensure that it has sufficient capacity and ability to manage this demand. However, this will take many months to complete and at present we are unable to give a firm date for its completion.

Patients should be directed to the statement on the ICB website for more information:

[website]

We thank you for your understanding and patience whilst we make the significant changes required to delivery this new treatment in a fair, safe and sustainable manner.

With best wishes



Dr Mike Caley
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Coventry and Warwickshire ICB

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