

# [***Bernie Sanders Calls On Novo Nordisk To Lower Cost Of Ozempic And Wegovy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNC-JJN1-JBCM-F00K-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 673 words

**Byline:** Sara Dorn, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** Sanders calls for lower drug prices has become a hallmark of his ***politics***.

**Body**

**Topline**

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., demanded Novo Nordisk, the Danish drug company that manufactures the wildly popular Ozempic and Wegovy weight loss drugs, lower the list price of the drugs, warning the outrageously high price has the potential to bankrupt Medicare, the American people and our entire health care system.

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Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Chairman Bernie Sanders (I-VT) questions witnesses during a hearing about working hours in the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill on March 14, 2024 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

Getty Images

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**Key Facts**

Sanders, who chairs the Senate committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, called on the company to lower the list price of Ozempic and Wegovy to no more than what they charge for this drug in Canada, in astatementWednesday following the release of a new study on the costs of the drug by researchers at Yale.

Ozempic costs about $300 per month out-of-pocket in Canada, compared to about $1,000 in the U.S.

Sanders argued that Ozempic has the potential to be a game changer in the diabetes and obesity epidemics in America, but noted that it s unaffordable to millions who need it at current prices.

The outrageously high price has the potential to bankrupt Medicare, the American people and our entire health care system, he wrote, referring to the surge in demand that s subsequently resulted in increased spending on Ozempic under Medicare Part D.

A recentKFF studyfound Medicare Part D spent a total of $5.7 billion in 2022 on Ozempic and other similar weight loss drugs combined, up from $57 million in 2018.

Sanders has made calling on pharmaceutical companies to lower their drug prices a signature issue, recently grilling executives at major drug manufacturers Johnson & Johnson, Merck and Bristol Myers Squibb about their prices in a Senate HELP committee hearing in January after they agreed to testify to avoid a subpoena detailing their methodology for pricing drugs.

Forbes has reached out to Novo Nordisk for comment.

**Big Number**

$1 trillion. That s how much it could cost state public insurance programs, health insurance exchange subsidies and U.S. taxpayers annually if Ozempic and similar weight loss drugs are made available to all obese Americans, MIT economists Brian Deese, Jonathan Gruber and Ryan Cummings estimated in a recent New York Timesop-ed. That exceeds the savings to the government from reduced diabetes incidence and other health care costs from excess weight by $800 billion annually, they wrote. This is a staggering sum. It is almost as muchas the government spendson the entireMedicare program and almost one-fifth ofthe entire amount America spendson health care."

**Contra**

Sanders cited a Yale study that found Ozempic costs Novo Nordisk less than $5 a month to manufacture. The company did not disclose its manufacturing costs in a statement toCNBCin response to the study, but told the outlet it spent almost $5 billion on research and development in 2023, and plans to spend more than $6 billion on a new deal to boost supply of the drug. The company also said out-of-pocket costs vary based on a patient s insurance plan.

**Key Background**

The diabetes drugs, which imitate a hormone called glucagon-like peptide-1 that signals fullness, became wildly popular over the past year as doctors began issuing prescriptions to patients who simply wanted to lose weight, including a growing list of celebrities who have publicly shared their weight loss success stories after taking the drugs. The Biden Administration is expected to call on Medicare to negotiate a lower price for Ozempic with Novo Nordisk as soon as next year, according to experts cited byCNBCas Medicare spending on the drugs has ballooned in recent years. Medicare Part D, which covers prescription drugs, has already nearly doubled spending on Ozempic since 2021, spending up to $4.6 billion in 2022 as demand for the drug has surged, according to a newKFF study.

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