



MEMORANDUM

Lilly's Mounjaro (tirzepatide) added to China's state insurance list for T2D – December 8, 2025

Mounjaro for T2D to be added to China's new commercial insurance innovative drug list, effective January 1, 2026

China's National Healthcare Security Administration (NHSA) [announced](#) yesterday that Lilly's Mounjaro (tirzepatide) for T2D will be added to the country's new commercial insurance innovative drug list, effective January 1, 2026. The list aims to guide private health insurers in offering expanded coverage for high-cost, innovative therapies that are currently too expensive or novel to qualify for inclusion on the national public reimbursement drug list. The [inaugural list](#) also includes 18 other innovative drugs, primarily used to treat Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

Table of Contents

1. [NHSA's announcement follows mid-2024 approval of tirzepatide in China](#)
2. [China's NHSA added 114 drugs to its public national reimbursement list for 2026](#)
3. [Lilly initiated a digital healthcare partnership to offer Mounjaro for weight loss directly to Chinese consumers earlier this year](#)
4. [Semaglutide patent set to expire in 2026 in China; new domestic biosimilars and other obesity candidates expected to increase competition](#)
5. [Close Concerns' Questions](#)

NHSA's announcement follows mid-2024 approval of tirzepatide in China

Lilly's tirzepatide received approval in [May 2024](#) from China's National Medical Products Administration (NMPA) for glycemic management in adults with T2D, followed by approval for chronic weight management in [July 2024](#). The latter decision was based on positive data from the [SURMOUNT-CN trial](#) (n=210), where BMI cutoffs were aligned with China's diagnostic and treatment guidelines. In the trial, tirzepatide conferred a mean body weight loss of 13.6% and 17.5% with 10 mg and 15 mg tirzepatide treatment, respectively, compared to 2.3% in the placebo group.

A pooled analysis published in [The Lancet](#) estimated that [half a billion](#) adults live with obesity or are overweight in China.

China's NHSA added 114 drugs to its public national reimbursement list for 2026

In yesterday's [announcement](#), China's NHSA added 114 new treatments, including therapies for diabetes, hypercholesterolemia, and other serious chronic conditions, to its public national reimbursement list of drugs. Following the expansion, China's public reimbursement list now supports 3,253 total drugs, including 1,857 Western chemical drugs and 1,396 proprietary Chinese medicines.

Lilly initiated a digital healthcare partnership to offer Mounjaro for weight loss directly to Chinese consumers earlier this year

Despite China's growing [anti-obesity campaign](#) and [Healthy China initiative](#), weight-loss drugs have not been covered by the national state insurance system and supplemental private insurance. Novo Nordisk's Ozempic (semaglutide) for T2D was added to the public national reimbursement drug list in 2022, following its approval in [April 2021](#). Still, Chinese regulators have explicitly stated that weight-loss drugs are not reimbursed under public insurance, even if the

drug itself is on the national reimbursement list for a separate indication.

As a result, patients continue to pay out-of-pocket for therapies, driving pressure for drugmakers to prioritize retail channels for prescription sales. In [August 2025](#), Lilly [announced](#) a partnership with [JD Health](#), one of China's leading digital healthcare platforms, through its official WeChat channel to offer direct-to-consumer (DTC) sales of Mounjaro for T2D and obesity in China. Through JD Health's online platform, patients can access consultations, prescriptions, home drug delivery, long-term follow-up, and disease education. This year, Novo Nordisk also initiated digital healthcare partnerships in China to market its semaglutide products (Ozempic, Wegovy, and Rybelsus) directly to Chinese consumers through JD Health ([May 2025](#)), Alibaba Health ([June 2025](#)), and Tencent Health ([April 2025](#)).

Semaglutide patent set to expire in 2026 in China; new domestic biosimilars and other obesity candidates expected to increase competition

With semaglutide's patent set to expire in China in [2026](#), domestic biosimilars are expected to increase competition in the Chinese weight-loss therapy market. Additionally, multiple companies based in China are advancing GLP-1 RA candidates for the treatment of obesity.

- In [July 2025](#), Hengrui announced positive topline [phase 3 results](#) of GLP-1/GIP RA HRS9531 for obesity.
- Additionally, at [ADA 2025](#), Sciwind Biosciences shared positive phase 3 [SLIMMER](#) trial (n=664) results for its oral GLP-1 RA, ecnoglutide.
- Most recently, in [November 2025](#), Innovent Biologics [announced](#) that mazdutide (dual GLP-1/glucagon RA) received approval from China's NMPA for weight management in adults with obesity or who are overweight.
 - As background, Innovent licensed this candidate from Lilly in [August 2019](#) for development and commercialization in China as a potential therapy for diabetes, obesity, and MASH. Mazdutide is currently under review by the NMPA for the treatment of T2D, and it has yet to be added to the public national reimbursement drug list or commercial insurance reimbursement drug list.

Close Concerns' Questions

1. How much of the out-of-pocket cost are private insurance companies expected to cover for Mounjaro in T2D?
2. Does Lilly anticipate that Mounjaro for T2D will be added to the public national reimbursement list in the future? How might pricing emerge, if so?
3. How will payments vary by regions for Mounjaro?
4. Will China consider adding weight-loss drugs to its either reimbursement list given the [WHO's new global guidelines](#), which recommend long-term GLP-1 RA and intensive behavioral therapy for the treatment of obesity?

--by Elizabeth Rose, Esther Min, Monica Oxenreiter, and Kelly Close