CLOSER LOOK

MEMORANDUM

Novo Nordisk announces EMA approval of temperature-flexible delivery for Wegovy injection in the EU – April 9, 2026

Update removes strict cold-chain requirements for up to 48 hours

Novo Nordisk announced today that the EU's EMA has approved an update to the injectable Wegovy label, allowing pharmacy-to-patient delivery at temperatures up to 30°C (86°F) for up to 48 hours. The update applies specifically to the storage and handling instructions used by pharmacists and clinicians, not the information leaflet for patients.

The change removes the requirement for a fully unbroken cold chain during the final delivery stage, which is expected to reduce packaging volume, lower shipping costs, and expand home delivery options across the region. This makes Wegovy the first injectable GLP-1 RA with flexibility for controlled-temperature delivery in Europe.

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The approval will likely support last-mile delivery, which is most prone to risk of cold chain breaks

Removal of strict cold-chain requirements has the potential to meaningfully reduce access barriers, particularly in the last mile. Last-mile delivery is the stage most prone to cold chain breaks because products leave controlled environments and enter non-refrigerated vans, sorting centers, and doorsteps.

In addition, the 48-hour delivery window allows pharmacies and online partners to ship Wegovy without heavy insulated packaging, gel packs, or temperature-monitoring devices. This directly lowers parcel weight and shipping costs and reduces the risk of temperature breaches that previously forced reships or product waste. For home delivery, this may entail simpler fulfillment workflows, fewer failed deliveries, and potentially more affordable deliveries.

Injectable GLP-1 RAs had strict cold chain requirements for medicine distribution

Most injectable GLP-1 RAs, such as Wegovy and Lilly's Zepbound, have historically required strict refrigeration from the time of manufacturing through patient use, creating a fragile and expensive supply chain. Cold-chain logistics depend on reliable electricity, temperature-controlled transport, and specialized packaging, and many regions lack this infrastructure.

While today's EMA decision applies only to distribution in Europe, it demonstrates a potential to reduce logistical barriers in less resourced regions globally, should other areas expand the labeling as well.

Close Concerns' Questions

1. To what extent could lower dependence on cold-chain reduce distribution costs in the EU?
2. How might this change, if approved, affect delivery and access in emerging markets with limited resources?
3. How might lifted cold chain restrictions influence payers' and governments' willingness to consider GLP-1 RA access programs?
4. When might Novo Nordisk expect to pursue a similar temperature-flexibility label update for injectable semaglutide in the US and other markets?

5. How might this EMA approval affect delivery requirements for generic semaglutide in India and China, where semaglutide lost its exclusivity?

--by Kayla Mathieu, Kat Moon, Monica Oxenreiter, and Kelly Close