

Pulse Advisory Partners

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
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Advisor(s): Dr. Joanne Gavin

Topic Title: Balancing the Scale: Prescriptions vs. Privilege

Audience: Novo Nordisk’s Board of Advisors

Sustainable Development Goals

SDG #3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

SDG #12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Executive Summary

A core tenet of successful businesses should be the inclusion of ethical decision-making and treatment towards all stakeholders, but especially towards consumers. This includes fair practices regarding access, distribution, and advertising of products. Consumer benefit should be placed above all else, and a company’s operating model can be called into question if this is not fulfilled. Such is the case with Novo Nordisk as they face growing ethical challenges stemming from the unprecedented growth in popularity of their GLP-1 medications. Ozempic is FDA-approved to treat patients with type-2 diabetes, while Wegovy is approved for use in weight management; both drugs face supply shortages driven by a surge in demand for aesthetic weight loss, leaving individuals who depend on these drugs for medical reasons without reliable access. Patients have experienced difficulty in obtaining their life-saving medication, with the increased demand putting further pressure on drug prices and causing inequities for those who actually need access. While scrutiny has increased regarding how pharmaceutical representatives promote these medications to physicians, every one of these factors contributes to the complex ethical landscape for Novo Nordisk.

Through their advertising, Novo Nordisk has created an environment of over-prescription and commodifying weight loss, contributing to negative mental health impacts and limiting the access of drugs to a population that requires them for medical reasons. The artificial increase in demand also contributes to an environmental burden caused by the significant waste produced from the single-use injection pens. In order to remedy these numerous ethical lapses, Novo Nordisk should amend its marketing campaigns around its products in addition to creating alternative incentive methods for its salespeople to ensure the equitable distribution of their products to patients who need it. These amendments should also include the funding and promotion of healthier preventative measures to counteract the unsustainable pharmaceutical reliance created by current messaging and selling. Additionally, Novo Nordisk must look into strategies to minimize the list price of their products to further expand access to patients who rely on them out of medical necessity. The company should also invest in biodegradable or reusable packaging to minimize their physical waste and environmental impact. Through our recommendations, Novo Nordisk can implement ethically-minded solutions in a fiscally-responsible manner while keeping its customers safe in an effort to avoid another disastrous pharmaceutical epidemic previously seen with the opioid crisis.