



# BEHIND THE COUNTER

Fall 2009

## Employers: Prevention is Key to Cutting Costs

According to a 2009 Medco study, "Leading Trends in Rx Plan Management," 90 percent of prescription benefit managers cite chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease as major drivers of their high health care costs – and they blame minimal attention given to personal health and wellness. In fact, 60 percent of survey respondents believe that wellness programs would produce the most savings, especially when focused toward self-inflicted causes of chronic diseases such as obesity and smoking.

Respondents of the survey also perceived specialty medication as the leading driver of prescription drug costs and the majority are advocating legislative action to bring generic versions of such drugs to market. In addition, 70 percent of respondents agreed that mail order pharmacies improve adherence to essential drug therapies (and diligent adherence to drug therapies can reduce annual health costs for many patients with chronic conditions). Interestingly, despite unanimous agreement that generic drug programs offer significant cost savings, 62 percent of respondents remain skeptical of \$4 generics programs at retail pharmacies.

*Source: Medco*

## Slowdown in Prescription Drug Spending

According to the "2009 Drug Trend Insights" report by Prime Therapeutics, prescription drug spending in 2008 increased at a much lower rate than total health care spending.

One reason for this slow in spending was a 4.7 percent rise in generic use. However, also contributing was a slight decline in utilization rates from the year before,

suggesting that people may not be filling or refilling prescriptions because of cost. Though this does reduce costs in the short term, greater adherence to prescriptions will reduce total health costs in the long term.

*Source: Prime Therapeutics 2009 Drug Trend Insights Report*

## Key Findings: Employer Health Benefit Survey

The 2009 Kaiser/HRET Employer Health Benefit Survey yielded some interesting statistics regarding prescription drug benefits. Nearly all covered workers also have employer-sponsored prescription drug benefits, and 89 percent have some sort of tiered cost-sharing formula. Seventy-eight percent of those workers have plans with three, four or more cost-sharing tiers. The tiers are generally defined as generic, preferred brand name and non-preferred brand name. Some plans have added a fourth tier for lifestyle drugs and expensive biologics.

Of those covered by plans with three or more tiers, a large majority use copayments rather than coinsurance for the first three tiers, with average copayments of \$10, \$27 and \$46. For those with coinsurance, workers pay an average percentage of 20 percent, 26 percent and 37 percent for the first three cost tiers.

HDHP/SO plans have a different cost-sharing mechanism. Only 43 percent of these plans subscribe to a tiered cost-sharing system. Fifteen percent of such plans employ the same cost-sharing system regardless of the drug type, while 29 percent pay 100 percent of drug costs once the plan deductible is met.

*Source: Employer Health Benefits—  
"2009 Annual Survey: Prescription Drug Benefits"*



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## First-Time Generics

Generic Name	Brand Name	Approval Date	Uses
PEG-3350 and Electrolytes	Colyte, Golytely, Nulytely	6/1/09	Laxative prior to colonoscopy, certain X-rays
Ropinirole Hydrochloride	Requip	6/1/09	Signs, symptoms of Parkinson's
Trazodone Hydrochloride	Desyrel	6/2/09	Anxiety, depression
Glyburide and Metformin Hydrochloride	Glucovance	6/3/09	Treats type 2 diabetes
Calcitonin-Salmon	Miacalcin, Fortical	6/8/09	Post-menopausal osteoporosis
Folic Acid	Vitamin B9	6/9/09	Helps body make new cells
Melphalan Hydrochloride	Alkeran	6/9/09	Chemotherapy
Cefoxitin	Mefoxin	6/12/09	Bacterial infections
Risperidone	Risperdal	6/17/09	Schizophrenia
Ethambutol Hydrochloride	Myambutol	6/17/09	Pulmonary tuberculosis
Vecuronium Bromide	Norcuron	6/17/09	Muscle relaxant
Chlorhexidine Gluconate	Peridex, Periogard	6/18/09	Oral rinse
Quinapril Hydrochloride	Accupril	6/18/09	Hypertension
Galantamine Hydrobromide	Razadyne	6/22/09	Alzheimer's Disease
Granisetron Hydrochloride	Kytril	6/22/09	Prevent nausea due to chemotherapy
Progesterone	First Progesterone, Prometrium	6/22/09	Regulates ovulation and menstruation
Alclometasone Dipropionate	Aclovate	6/23/09	Eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis
Metronidazole	Flagyl	6/23/09	Bacterial and protozoal infections
Meperidine	Demerol	6/24/09	Pain reliever
Levonorgestrel	Mirena, Norplant System, Plan B, Next Choice	6/24/09	Birth Control
Epirubicin	Ellence	6/24/09	Chemotherapy
Dorzolamide Hydrochloride	Trusopt	6/25/09	Glaucoma
Azithromycin	Zithromax	6/26/09	Antibiotic
Oxcarbazepine	Trileptal	6/26/09	Epileptic seizures
Tri Lo Sprintec	Ortho Tri-Cyclen Lo	6/29/09	Birth Control

Generic Name	Brand Name	Approval Date	Uses
Amlodipine Besylate	Norvasc	7/2/09	Hypertension
Bicalutamide	Casodex, Cosudex	7/6/09	Prostate cancer, hirsutism
Galantamine	Razadyne	7/9/09	Alzheimer's
Sumatriptan Succinate	Imitrex	7/9/09	Migraine headaches
Flecainide Acetate	Tambocor	7/9/09	Ventricular arrhythmias
Fosinopril Sodium and Hydrochlorothiazide	Monopril-HCT	7/9/09	Hypertension
Technetium TC 99M Sestamibi	Cardiolite, Miraluma	7/10/09	Technetium imaging agent
Dorzolamide Hydrochloride & Timolol Maleate	Cosopt	7/14/09	Glaucoma
Liothyronine Sodium	Cytomel, Triostat	7/14/09	thyroid insufficiency, obesity, metabolic disorders, fatigue
Propoxyphene Hydrochloride	Darvon	7/17/09	Pain reliever
Digoxin	Digitex, Lanoxicaps, Lanoxin,	7/20/09	Various heart conditions
Adenosine	Adenocard	7/20/09	Supraventricular tachycardia
Vinorelbine Tartrate	Navelbine	7/22/09	Chemotherapy
Penicillin G. Potassium	Pfizerpen	7/23/09	Antibiotic
Benzotropine Mesylate	Cogentin	7/28/09	Parkinson's disease
Carboplatin	Paraplatin	7/29/09	Chemotherapy
Triamcinolone Acetonide	Nasacort, Azmacort	7/30/09	Asthma
Flucanazole	Diflucan	7/30/09	Antifungal antibiotic
Alclometasone Dipropionate	Aclovate	7/30/09	Skin irritation, psoriasis
Carbidopa and Levodopa	Atamet, Parcopa, Sinemet	7/31/09	Parkinson's Disease
Betamethasone Acetate and Betamethasone Sodium Phosphate	Celestone soluspan	7/31/09	Treatment of inflamed areas of body, and multiple diseases
Metoprolol Succinate	Toprol XL	8/3/09	Hypertension
Divalproex Sodium	Depakote	8/3/09	Seizure disorders
Idarubicin Hydrochloride	Idamycin PFS	8/4/09	Leukemia
Carisoprodol	Soma, Vanadom	8/6/09	Muscle relaxer



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Generic Name	Brand Name	Approval Date	Uses
Oxaliplatin	Eloxatin	8/7/09	Chemotherapy
Tacrolimus	Prograf	8/10/09	During organ transplant
Sertraline Hydrochloride	Zoloft, Lustral	8/10/09	Antidepressant
Clindamycin Phosphate and Benzoyl Peroxide	Clindoxyl, BenzaClin	8/11/09	Acne
Ofloxacin	Floxin	8/11/09	Antibiotic
Minocycline Hydrochloride	Dynacin, Minocin	8/13/09	Antibiotic
Aspirin and Dipyridamole	Aggrenox	8/14/09	Prevent stroke
Glycopyrrolate	Robinul	8/18/09	Anticholinergic – used before surgery
Clonidine	Catapres, Duraclon	8/18/09	Hypertension
Bisoprodol Fumarate	Zebeta	8/18/09	Hypertension
Oxycodone Hydrochloride	OxyContin	8/24/09	Painkiller
Clindamycin	Cleocin	8/26/09	Antibiotic
Promethazine Hydrochloride & Phenylephrine Hydrochloride	Promethazine VC	8/25/09	Nasal allergies, common cold
Clonidine Hydrochloride	Catapres	8/26/09	Hypertension
Ranitidine Hydrochloride	Zantac	8/27/09	Ulcers, esophagitis, GERD
Cephalexin	Keflex, Panixine, Biocef, Zartan	8/28/09	Antibiotic
Cetirizine Hydrochloride	Zyrtec	8/28/09	Antihistamine
Phentermine Hydrochloride	Ionamin, Adipex-P	8/31/09	Appetite suppressant
Heparin Sodium	Calcilean, Calciparine, Hepalean, Heparin Leo, Liguamin	8/31/09	Used for various heart conditions and procedures
Norethindrone acetate & ethinyl estradiol & ferrous fumarate	Estrostep Fe, Loestrin Fe	9/1/09	Birth Control
Temazepam	Restoril	9/8/09	Insomnia
Nateglinide	Starlix	9/9/09	Type 2 diabetes
Haloperidol	Haldol	9/14/09	Antipsychotic
Piperacillin and Tazobactam	Zosyn, Tazomed	9/15/09	Treat infections
Deferoxamine Mesylate	Desferal	9/15/09	Iron poisoning, iron overload
Irinotecan hydrochloride	Camptosar	9/16/09	Treats cancer of colon or rectum

Generic Name	Brand Name	Approval Date	Uses
Verapamil Hydrochloride	Verelan, Isoptin, Covera-HS, Calan	9/17/09	Heart and blood pressure conditions
Ribavirin	Rebetol	9/17/09	Hepatitis C
Zaleplon	Sonata, Starnoc	9/17/09	Insomnia
Baclofen	Lioresal	9/18/09	Muscle Relaxer
Glimepiride	Amaryl	9/22/09	Diabetes
Ifosfamide	Mitoxana, Ifex	9/22/09	Chemotherapy
Ramipril	Altace	9/24/09	Hypertension
Alendronate Sodium	Fosamax	9/24/09	Post-menopausal osteoporosis
Atenolol	Tenormin	9/25/09	Chest pain, hypertension
Ondansetron Hydrochloride	Zofran	9/25/09	Relief of nausea from surgery
Lithium Carbonate	Eskalith	9/25/09	Manic depression
Cilostazol	Pletal	9/28/09	Poor circulation
Timolol Maleate	Timoptic, Betimol	9/28/09	Glaucoma
Caffeine citrate	Cafcit, No Doz, Vivarin, several more	9/30/09	Central nervous system stimulant
Metoprolol	Lopressor, Toprol-XL	9/30/09	Chest pain, hypertension