

Senior Health

Health And Cost Benefits For Older Americans Taking Dietary Supplements

(NAPSA)—By the year 2030, more than 70 million Americans will be between 65 and 75 years old. Two recent studies now show that the right health maintenance behavior among the elderly could help avoid or delay a loss of independence or major medical problem.

The typical American diet does not always provide a sufficient level of nutrients. The studies, conducted by The Lewin Group, whose reports are often cited as the gold standard among government policy makers, indicate that with the use of certain dietary supplements, senior citizens can empower themselves while possibly reducing health care costs. With the cost of health care for Americans over age 65 estimated to increase to nearly \$16 trillion per year by the year 2030, billions of dollars in potential savings could be realized.

One study found daily intake of 1,200 milligrams of calcium with vitamin D could significantly reduce the occurrence of hip fractures among those over age 65. In fact, the study estimated that over a five-year period of time, more than 734,000 hip fractures could be avoided and more than \$13.9 billion in health care costs could be saved by providing seniors with the necessary calcium and vitamin D supplements. Behind that savings is the compelling fact that 734,000 people could potentially be prevented from suffering a hip fracture.

Another study found that daily intake of approximately 1,800 milligrams of omega-3 fatty acids could help reduce the incidence of coronary heart disease (CHD) among the over-age-65 population. Approx-



As the number of seniors continues to grow, a growing number of them will be using dietary supplements.

imately 384,303 hospitalizations and \$3.1 billion in costs could be avoided across a five-year period.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which gradually destroys sharp, central vision, is another major problem for seniors. The study found that daily intake of 6-10 milligrams of lutein with zeaxanthin could result in cost savings of \$2.5 billion with more than 100,000 individuals able to maintain a level of independence over a five-year period.

An estimated 187 million American adults take dietary supplements. A majority of users recently polled cite the most prevalent reason for taking supplements is to improve their overall health and well-being. Experts do caution, however, that seniors ought to consult their physician when embarking on a supplement program, especially if they are taking medications.

To learn more about dietary supplements, visit the Web site www.supplementinfo.org.