



# spotlight on health

## Consumer Myths And Realities About Health Care Spending

(NAPSA)—With a weakened economy, some consumers are unknowingly compromising their health in an effort to save money. Changing daily health care regimens without consulting a doctor or pharmacist can be dangerous and may end up costing you more down the road.

CVS pharmacist Mandy Kwong debunks common myths about health care spending.

**Myth:** “Generic medications are not as safe and effective as the brand names I’m used to.”

**Reality:** Generics are safe, effective and approved by the FDA. By speaking to your pharmacist, you can ensure that the active ingredients contained in a generic alternative are the same as the brand name you are taking. By switching from brand names to generics, you can receive the same treatment at a lower cost.

**Myth:** “If I feel better, I can stop taking my antibiotic and save the leftover pills so I won’t have to incur the expense of another doctor’s visit if I get sick again.”

**Reality:** You should take all medications as prescribed by your doctor. For example, when your doctor prescribes an antibiotic for you to treat a specific infection, it is important that you finish all the medicine, even if you feel better after a few days. If you don’t, any bacteria left in your body could possibly become resistant to the antibiotic, which means the antibiotic won’t work as well the next time you take it.

**Myth:** “To save money, I can take half of my prescribed dose or only take it every other time.”

**Reality:** To prevent your condition from getting worse, it is important to always take your



**Pharmacist Mandy Kwong**

medications as prescribed by your doctor. Also, some medications should not be crushed or split. Never split pills unless directed by your pharmacist or doctor. Your pharmacist may be able to recommend less expensive alternatives to your current medication.

**Myth:** “I can save money on prescriptions by filling them at multiple pharmacies.”

**Reality:** By using multiple pharmacies, you put your health at risk because your pharmacist may not have a full view of all the medications you take in order to check for dangerous drug interactions. Use one pharmacy to fill prescriptions to save money and keep your family healthy. Inform your pharmacist of all medications you and your family members are taking, including over-the-counter items, vitamins and supplements. With access to your prescription history, CVS/pharmacy has systems in place to automatically check for generic alternatives, duplicate therapies and dangerous drug interactions.