



spotlight on health

How To Cut Prescription Costs Safely

(NAPSA)—New savings programs are designed to offset the rising cost of prescription drugs and other medical supplies that will only increase as the baby boomer generation begins aging.

“The lack of affordable insurance for all, the proliferation of expensive treatments and an emphasis on curative, rather than preventive care are the main culprits in the high cost of health care,” says Matt Hartwig, President of the Missouri Pharmacy Association.

Although drugs account for less than 10 percent of overall health care spending, some Americans have called for “importing” cheap drugs from Canada and other countries. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which ensures the safety of pharmaceutical products sold in the U.S., says the quality, origin and safety of imported drugs can’t be determined and it supports keeping imported drugs illegal.

“Drug companies spend more than \$800 million on average to develop each drug,” said Chris Viehbacher, President, U.S. Pharmaceuticals, GlaxoSmithKline. “Drug companies bear the burden of innovation, at considerable risk—in fact only one out of 1,000,000 new compounds ever makes it to the patient.”

A safer and more practical alternative may be to take advantage of the savings programs being offered by pharmaceutical companies. These programs may reduce prescription drug costs by more, on average, than any



Savings programs can be the safest alternative when it comes to cutting prescription costs.

imported drug could. Many Americans remain unaware of the benefits available through prescription drug savings programs, which help eligible patients receive prescription name brand medications at a reduced cost or even for free.

To address the 90 percent of health care costs not related to drug prices, experts say that emphasis should be shifted to prevention, which can dramatically reduce costs later on.

Prevention can take many forms. The state of Missouri has just launched an important new initiative to get people to take their medicines properly. Not taking medicines as directed can mean that it takes longer for a patient to get well or may lead to further health complications. This drives up health care costs by making more demands on the health care system.