



spotlight on health care

The Prescription For Lowering Health Care Costs

(NAPSA)—It can be easy to save money on medicine. Experts say following doctors' orders can save more than lives; it can save a health care system spiraling out of control.

"One of the key factors in rising health care costs is the failure of patients to take their medicines properly," says Matt Hartwig, President of the Missouri Pharmacy Association. "Not following a prescribed regimen means it takes longer to get well—which has economic as well as physical costs. But more problematically, it can lead to long-term health problems that require more medicines and expensive treatments."

Magic bullet solutions to controlling drug costs, such as importation and greater reliance on generic drugs, are counterproductive, many say, because they ruin the incentive of drug companies to innovate new lifesaving medicines by draining their research and development budgets.

"Many people don't realize that drug companies, not the government, bear the majority of the costs and risks of developing new medicines," says Christopher Viehbacher of pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline. "The vast majority of new medicines are discovered and developed by the pharmaceutical industry, which invests more than four times more in R&D than the average industry does."

In fact, controlling health care costs is a long-term challenge with no easy solution. However, patients are a key part of the



Following doctors' orders saves you money.

equation.

First, patients must gain a deeper appreciation for the role and importance of medicine to their overall well-being. In Missouri, Governor Matt Blunt signed a proclamation declaring September "Value of Medicines Awareness Month."

In addition, the Missouri Pharmacy Association, with partners including GlaxoSmithKline, has launched a campaign to educate consumers on how they can control health care costs by following their prescribed treatment regimen and exploring the many options for saving on their prescriptions.

"Taking medicines properly is a win-win for patients and for society," says Hartwig. "Patients following a prescribed drug regimen will lead healthier, more productive lives. It's also a preventive measure against the type of long-term health problems that really drive up health care costs for everybody. A healthy society makes fewer long-term demands on the health care system."