Top of the News

Dietary Supplements Help Reduce Healthcare Costs

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**“Supplementation at preventive intake levels in high-risk populations can reduce the number of disease-associated medical events, representing the potential for hundreds of millions of dollars in savings.”
—Frost & Sullivan**

Use of specific dietary supplements in targeted populations not only provides health benefits, but, according to a new economic report, also offers significant savings for healthcare costs. The report, “Smart Prevention—Health Care Cost Savings Resulting from the Targeted Use of Dietary Supplements,” issued by New York, NY-based economic firm Frost & Sullivan, through a grant from the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) Foundation, Washington, D.C., examined four different chronic diseases and the potential for healthcare cost savings when U.S. adults 55 and older, diagnosed with these chronic diseases, used one of eight different dietary supplement regimens.

The analysis demonstrated that supplementation at preventive intake levels in high-risk populations can reduce the number of disease-associated medical events, representing the potential for hundreds of millions of dollars in savings—and billions in some cases. In the U.S., 75% of healthcare dollars go to the treatment of chronic disease, with only 3% spent oprevention, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Medical events (i.e., inpatient procedures and emergency room visits) related to coronary heart disease, one of the conditions examined in this report, are expected to cost $77.92 billion per year. However, according to the new Frost & Sullivan report, if men and women 55 years and older with elevated cholesterol levels took psyllium dietary fiber at preventive intake levels daily, the cost savings for coronary heart disease could be almost $2.5 billion dollars a year, equating to just less than $19.9 billion in cumulative net savings between 2013 and 2020. Similarly, if all women over 55 with osteoporosis took calcium and **vitamin D** at preventive intake levels daily, society could save $1.5 billion dollars a year, or just more than $12 billion dollars between 2013 and 2020.

To identify these potential savings, Frost & Sullivan conducted a systematic review of hundreds of scientific studies on eight dietary supplement regimens across four diseases to determine the reduction in disease risk from these preventive practices. The firm then projected the rates of medical events across the high-risk populations and applied cost benefit analyses to determine the cost savings if people at high risk took supplements at preventive intake levels.
“As an economist in the face of escalating healthcare costs,” said Chris Shanahan, global program manager, Frost & Sullivan, “it’s rewarding to reveal good news for healthcare practitioners, public policy officials, insurance companies and patients that select supplement interventions can reduce the chances of experiencing a costly medical event and help control rising healthcare costs.”

A report released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) indicated 6.8 million consumers saved an estimated $1.2 billion on health insurance premiums in 2012 due to the “rate review” provision of the Affordable Care Act, which brought more accountability to slow the growth of health insurance premiums. The Affordable Care Act, along with state efforts, continues to bring scrutiny to proposed health insurance rate increases and is saving consumers real money as a result, the report said.
“Thanks to the healthcare law, we are seeing that holding insurance companies accountable is leading to increased competition and saving billions of dollars for consumers across the country,” said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. “This type of competition and transparency will continue in the Health Insurance Marketplace, or Exchanges, where Americans will be able to shop for and compare plans side-by-side to find the one that fits their needs and budget.”

U.S. Healthcare Law Saved Consumers $1.2 Billion in 2012