

Inside Tennessee's Medicine Cabinet

Blue Report Update

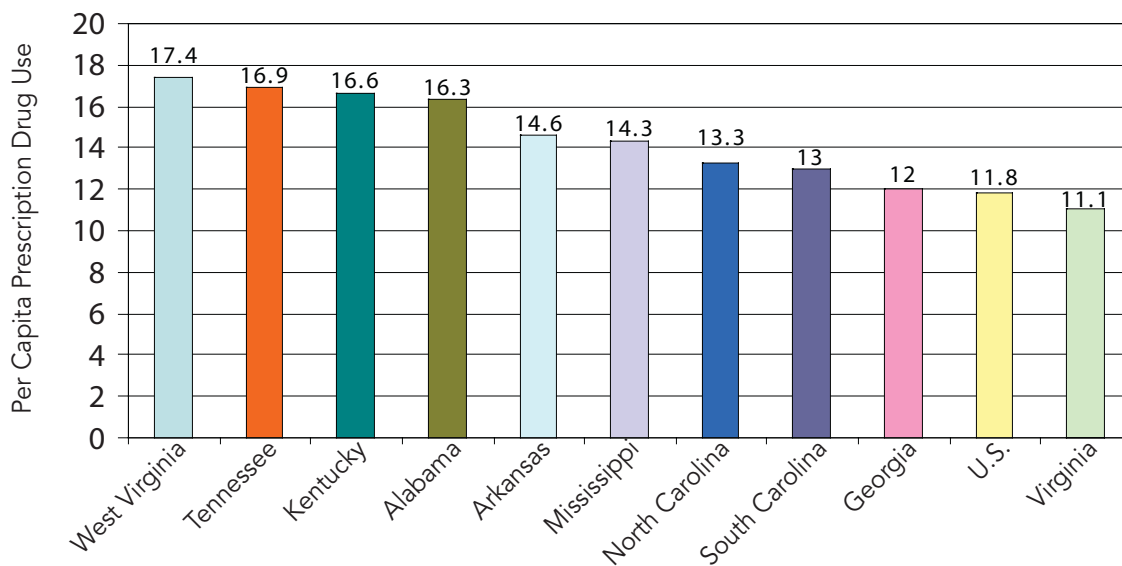
January, 2008

The number of pill bottles in Tennesseans' medicine cabinets has decreased. According to Novartis, a world-leading pharmaceutical company, Tennessee has lost its long-held title of top prescription drug use state to West Virginia, which averages 17.4 prescriptions per capita.

Coming in at No. 2, the Volunteer State averages 16.9 prescriptions per year for each man, woman and child. That's a 6.6 percent decrease from last year's 18.1 prescriptions.

Additionally, the growth in per capita spending for prescriptions in Tennessee is dramatically less than the U.S. average. Where Tennessee's per capita spending grew by 7.2 percent to \$1,272.94, spending at the national level increased 18.8 percent to \$948.72. In West Virginia spending grew by 21.7 percent.

We Are No. 2 Prescriptions Per Capita 2006



*Source: 2007-2008 Novartis Pharmacy Benefit Report

Many private and public organizations across Tennessee have collaboratively engaged on various fronts to combat the overuse and abuse of prescription drugs. From the use of health information technology and education campaigns to safety initiatives and statewide databases, the efforts of the entire health care community are beginning to impact the drug use trend and improve health care safety and quality for all Tennesseans.

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As a health care solutions company, BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee seeks innovative ways to address the quality and affordability of health care for millions of Tennesseans. Some of those innovations are aimed directly at the safe and effective use of prescription drugs in the state.

BlueCross Initiatives

Education

BlueCross' Demand Generics campaign, which launched in 2001, has had a significant effect on the use of safe and cost-effective generic drugs by BlueCross members.

Educational efforts directed at both members and physicians have moved the generic dispensing rate from 37.7 percent in 2001 to 61.8 percent in 2007.

Technology

In 2007, a half million prescriptions were dispensed using e-prescribing tools sponsored by BlueCross' pharmacy department and BlueCross' health information technology subsidiary, Shared Health. These applications, provided at no charge to Tennessee clinicians, accounted for 62 percent of all e-prescribing transactions in the state.

These e-prescribing tools allow authorized physicians to securely order safe and cost-effective medications directly from their personal computers or personal digital assistants (PDA). The technology eliminates traditional paper prescriptions, thus helping reduce the risk of medication errors and adverse drug events.

Resources

For more detailed information on the prescription drug use issue in Tennessee, visit the BlueCross Web site at www.bcbst.com. The Blue Report, "Inside Tennessee's Medicine Cabinet: How Much is Enough?," is located in the News & Issues section, or type "medicine cabinet" into the search function.

*Novartis, Pharmacy Benefits Report, Facts and Figures, 2007 Edition



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