



## Mastery over Health Care Cost Drivers

Welcome to Health Economy's tip sheet - a quick overview of a costly illness and tips on mastering its costs. This is a tiny sample of what a Health Economy Gold Report can give your clients. The Gold Report shows your client what illnesses and health risks are driving their costs. Our research-driven strategies give them follow-through tools.

As the January renewal season approaches, **now is the perfect time to go for the Gold** (Report) - your client will have excellent decision-support for making plan changes and you will have plenty of time to negotiate the changes with the carriers.

We hope you find these tips interesting and useful.

### *High Blood Pressure*

- ✓ Two-thirds of the people on high blood pressure drugs still have high blood pressure.
- ✓ The majority of patients take three or more different pills every day.
- ✓ Obesity is the most common cause; High blood cholesterol also boosts blood pressure.

#### Why It Costs So Much:

- ✓ High blood pressure damages blood vessels, especially in the heart, kidney, and brain. When a patient's kidney falters or fails, a dialysis machine takes over.  
**One year of kidney dialysis = \$40,000.**
- ✓ Damaged blood vessels in the heart can lead to heart attacks.  
**Average cost of 90 days of care after a heart attack = \$40,000.**
- ✓ Lipitor, a drug to lower blood cholesterol, is the biggest selling drug in the world.  
**One year's supply of Lipitor = \$1,000.**

#### Lowering the (Cost) Pressure:

- ✓ Research has shown that the lower-cost, older prescription drugs are as effective or more effective than the new higher cost drugs for high blood pressure. Health plans can require a trial with diuretics, or offer an incentive to use the lower cost drug.
- ✓ Patients who can measure their blood pressure at home have better results and lower blood pressure. Covering a blood pressure monitor or cuff would not only help the patient take better care of himself, but also could reduce costs for a health plan.