

Pay for the medicine, not the name brand.

Every day seems to bring news of a new drug discovery, along with TV ads filled with visions of blue skies, sunny days and slow-motion jaunts across fields of green. Americans are using more prescription drugs to manage health conditions and prevent problems than ever before, and those drugs are also more expensive than ever before. According to the *National Institute for Health Care Management*, there were 10 prescriptions written for every man, woman, and child in America in 2001 costing \$155 billion.<sup>1</sup> It's one of the reasons we're living healthier, longer lives. However, the amount we spend on drugs increases nearly 20 percent every year, and is one of the main reasons the cost of health care is increasing.

Fortunately, there are simple things we all can do to help keep health care affordable. Like asking your doctor or pharmacist about [FDA-approved] generic equivalents whenever you get a prescription. The generic drug is just as effective as the name brand. Both medicines have the same chemically-identical active ingredients, the same strength and the same dosage. But on average, a generic drug can cost less than one-third the price of the name-brand drug. One reason is that drug companies spend more than twice as much on marketing and advertising name-brand drugs than on research and development.

Because we all pay for the rising cost of health care through increased premiums, co-pays, and deductibles, we all have a role to play in keeping health care affordable. Choosing generic drugs and working with your doctor to find the right treatments are a few simple things you can do that will make a big difference. Visit [www.bcbstx.com](http://www.bcbstx.com) for more information about keeping health care affordable.

<sup>1</sup>National Institute for Health Care Management, "Prescription Drug Expenditures in 2001: Another Year of Escalating Costs," May 2002