



# Quest Physician Update

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## Transforming Healthcare-Together.

Dear Colleagues,

Your efforts making medications safer and more affordable is paying off for patients and families in our region.

In 2007, a Quest Team explored various strategies to make prescription medications more affordable. One of the team's recommendations was to share information about clinician's personal prescribing with them and to share information about clinics with patients. The team also recommended educating consumers and clinicians about the comparability of generic medications to their branded predecessor.

The first Quest *Generic Prescribing Report* was issued in 2008. Over the subsequent two years, our region's generic prescribing rate has improved by an impressive 9%. The Quest Pharmacy Steering Committee believed that public reporting was contributing to the increase but could not be certain. The *Generic Prescribing Report* recently expanded to include practices throughout a 21-county region in central Illinois. The tri-county has a 3% higher generic prescribing rate than the 21-county region overall. Public reporting is having an effect.

This is a small but important difference. Every 1% increase in generic prescribing saves approximately 2% of overall prescription costs. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, our 21-county region spends \$855 million on prescription medications every year. Lowering costs by 6% would save \$51 million for central Illinois every year. And, we know it can be done. You have done it in the tri-county area. It is not just about saving money. Making prescriptions more affordable helps patients stay on their medicines. Local data demonstrates that about 15% more patients stay on cholesterol medication when it is generic and less expensive.

Dr. Lucian Leape, recently wrote, "Of the three major approaches to improving patient safety – regulation, financial incentives, and public reporting – the most promising is public reporting of performance information and feedback to providers. Transparency is an idea whose time has come and both hospitals and the public will be better off because of it."

Quality Quest agrees. Transparency is not only helpful, it is essential.

Thank you for all you do to make patient care better and safer. Together, we will transform healthcare.

Respectfully,