



MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY



## *SPARTAN SENIOR*

A newsletter for Michigan State University Retirees

LANSING AREA LOCAL EDITION February—March 2013

### Brand versus Generic Drugs: Why make the switch?

Almost 80% of the prescriptions filled in the United States are for generic drugs.<sup>1</sup> Not all brand name drugs are available as generics. When new drugs are first made, they are protected under patents which allow the company to be the sole seller. Drug patents typically last for up to 20 years. Once a patent expires, other drug companies can begin to manufacture generics. With the number of generic drugs available on the market constantly increasing, many patients question the quality and effectiveness of generic drugs when compared to the brand name counterparts.

Before a company is allowed to sell a generic drug, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is responsible for regulating prescription drugs, must approve it. The FDA requires generics to be the same active ingredient, strength, dosage form, and route of administration as the brand name. Generics must prove to be the same, or bioequivalent, to the brand name drug. Bioequivalency testing measures the amount of drug in the bloodstream. If this amount is the same for the generic as the brand, it is expected to perform the same. Slight natural variations are allowable and not medically important. These variations are the same that are expected and allowed when comparing different batches of the same brand name drug. The FDA has specific limits set for acceptable variations in bioequivalency testing. Recent comparison of bioequivalence testing from 1996 to 2007 showed an average difference of about 3.5% in the amount of drug reaching the systemic bloodstream between generic and brand name drugs.<sup>2</sup> In addition to assuring that generic drugs have the same performance standards, the FDA also requires the same quality standards be met as the brand name drugs. Manufacturers of generic drugs are held to the same rigorous standards set for testing, packaging and manufacturing as those of brand name drugs. Many manufacturing facilities produce both brand and generic products.

Generic drugs generally cost about 80 to 85% less than their brand name counterparts. In 2011, use of generics resulted in a savings of nearly \$193 million.<sup>1</sup> Based on the standards upheld by the FDA, lower cost does not lead to lower quality of generic drugs. Generic drugs are priced lower due to manufacturers not having to repeat costly clinical trials. Competition also lowers generic prices since more than one manufacturer can make the same generic drug thereby removing the monopoly created while brand name drugs are under patent. Manufacturers also largely do not need to promote and advertise a generic drug since it is already established in the market.

The FDA continues to evaluate the safety of both brand and generic drugs following their release to the public. Frequently, reports of adverse events are those that are already known as side effects of the active drug. The FDA encourages reporting of all adverse events associated with drugs in order to understand what may be the cause. If the need arises, the FDA notifies healthcare professionals and the public of these reports. Adverse events may be voluntarily reported to the FDA at [www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch](http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch).

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# MSURA Annual Meeting and Volunteer Luncheon Monday, May 6, 2013

## LUNCHEON RESERVATION

Lincoln Room at Kellogg Center  
Registration begins 11:30, Lunch begins 12:00 noon

For oven-roasted chicken breast with Michigan cherry sauce, rice pilaf, mixed green salad, rolls, and beverage, cheesecake: Please hold reservations for:

For grilled vegetarian paella, basil-tomato slaw, rolls and beverage, cheesecake: Please hold reservations for:

The cost of \$ 22.00 per person includes tax, gratuity, and free parking. If dietary supplement is needed, please call Gale Gower at 517-332-0194 before April 29.

Please clip or copy this form after completing it and mail with a check payable to MSU Retirees Association, before April 29, to Bob Wenner, MSURA Treasurer, P. O. Box 203, Okemos, MI 48805.

## Special Meeting on Retirees and America's Financial Future

In view of the financial uncertainties posed by the current budgetary debate in Congress, the MSURA Board has scheduled a special meeting. At 2:00 PM on Monday, January 28, [Steven F. Mosshart, AIF, Chief Investment Strategist of Straight-Line Investment Advisors](#) will discuss the situation and possible strategies for retirees. This meeting is set for our regular location, the credit union at Mt. Hope and Farm Lane.

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Generic drugs usually look different than the brand name drug. Differences in color and shape will not change how the drug works. In general, patients are notified when they are given a new generic or a generic made by a different manufacturer. If a medication looks different than usual, be sure to ask your pharmacist to ensure you are receiving the correct medication.

Even though not all medications have a generic available, there may be additional options to help lower drug costs. If you are struggling with the cost of a brand drug, there may be generic options available within the same, or a similar, class of medications. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for more options.

Ashley Carpenter, PharmD Candidate  
*Ferris State University*

### References

1. Generic Pharmaceutical Association. Generic drug savings in the U.S: Fourth Edition 2012.
2. Davit BM, Nwakama PE, Buehler GJ et al. Comparing generic and innovator drugs: a review of 12 years of bioequivalence data from the United States Food and Drug Administration. *Ann Pharmacother.* 2009 Oct;43(10):1583-97.



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## KNITTING TO A NEW YEAR

Here's to a new year-a new beginning-a new resolution-to help those in need. The wolf can stand the wintery weather of Michigan and can be a beautiful sight but the wolf howling at someone's door is not. Unfortunately too many people are seeing and hearing the howling of cold and hunger right here in Lansing. What can I do you ask? Simple little things can, when multiplied, change this course.

A skein of yarn, a pair of knitting needles, a few minutes of your time, can put a warm hat on some cold head. Add a few more moments and a lap robe or a shawl appears to keep a shut-in a little bit warmer and give them a feeling that someone actually cares about them. Many elderly have no one to visit them and they suffer in silence in a lonely room. You can make a difference with just a skein of yarn and a pair of needles.

You ask what you can do? There's your answer-so simple-so little time-such a big difference. If you want to start the new year with a happy, caring resolution to stop the howling wolf please call Rosemary Pavlik at (517)882-2030. The Knitting Group meets every other Tuesday from 1:00-4:00 p.m. in Room 27 of the Nisbet Building. No need to join the group if you prefer to knit/crochet in your own home as long as those needles get clacking.

—Rosemary Pavlik

## How to View your Newsletter in Color

This Winter 2013 International Edition newsletter was printed in black and white as a cost saving measure. However, our photos are usually taken in color and the software we use to create the newsletter makes color available to us. If you view your newsletter on our web site you will always see it in color if your computer has a color monitor. This is true for both local and international editions.

### REMINDER

Please send your nominations for the Volunteer of the Year Award by mail to L. Patrick Scheetz, 1160 Woodingham Dr, East Lansing, MI 48823 or to him by e-mail at [scheetz@msu.edu](mailto:scheetz@msu.edu).

**MSU RETIREES ASSOCIATION  
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