

A LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO LATELY...

You might not be aware, but every year, GSC does an analysis of drug claims and costs. Why? Because at GSC, we've pretty much established ourselves as full-fledged benefits geeks that are totally into data and cool stats. But this year, we can barely contain our excitement. We're expanding our yearly Drug Study and doing (drum roll please) a full on Health Study. Yup, we've decided to take things up a notch and plunge even deeper into the depths of GSC's claims data (combining data that has never been combined before!), in order to focus more on the overall health of you – our plan members.

We've called this year's study "Massaging the Data". Why, you might ask? Well, one thing we're learning is that we all really love our massages, so much in fact, that they reign supreme in health benefits costs. Even our teenagers are getting tons of them (all that texting and Instagramming must be exhausting, we guess.) But really, we're just so stoked about this year's study that we figured we'd give you a sneak peek into some of our findings. Take a look and see for yourself...

DID YOU KNOW? *Health Study edition!*

In their 20's, women spend

80% MORE THAN MEN ON PARAMEDICALS (MASSAGE, CHIRO, PHYSIO)

For plan members in their 30's, massage accounts for

25% OF THE FEMALE AND JUST UNDER 20% THE MALE HEALTH SPEND

20% of health benefits claimants drive

63% OF HEALTH BENEFIT COSTS

AND SOME COOL STATS ABOUT DRUGS!

\$34.5 BILLION – drug spend in Canada

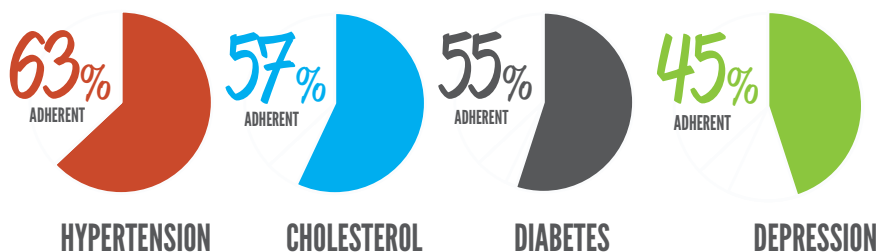
\$29.3 BILLION – prescription drug spend in Canada

\$1 BILLION – rise in drug cost from 2013 to 2014

\$17.1 BILLION is paid by private plans like yours

The highest drug adherence rate...

is among hypertension patients with 63% adherent (taking their meds as prescribed)



CHANGE IS HAPPENING...

Now, the point to all of this, you ask? Well, we're getting there. You might remember from a few months back, we told you about that new thing we're doing called Change4Life™. It is aimed at the biggest problem Canadian health care faces – chronic disease. You know, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, depression..... So those disease states are our primary focus and we are going to try to develop strategies to help people manage them. Hint: it will not involve more massages. More details on our Change4Life initiatives coming soon, so stay tuned. Oh, and we'll share some more data from our Health Study over the next few months too (you're welcome).

HEALTH BENEFITS (AS EXPLAINED BY A 23 YEAR OLD)

THIS MONTH: BIOLOGICS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Ok, so there's no denying that Hermès is like, the epitome of chic – especially when it comes to the legendary Birkin bag. Drooled over by females around the world, and mourned when anyone with too much money on their hands dares to deface it -- after decades on the market, there's obviously something to be said about the quality and longevity of it. Obtaining the iconic bag requires adding your name to a list, waiting patiently, oh and having approx \$14 grand readily available.. So why the huge spectacle for what are essentially a few pieces of leather sewn together? Well, for starters, they're assembled by a single person who takes their time and care to sew each piece ensuring 100% flawlessness.


So, while it is totes true that you want that purse, and you totally do not want Crohn's Disease or Rheumatoid arthritis, think of biologic drugs as like, the Birkin equivalent of the health benefits world – they also total more than my college tuition, are complicated to manufacture (since they use like, living organisms or whatever) and are not mass produced. And so like, since GSC is a Pharmacy Benefit Manager (or "PBM" to the cool kids in class), we actually have a totally unique policy set in place to manage the Biologics.

So say you really need to get your hand on a biologic drug (or rather a Birkin, because that monogram Coach bag you and the rest of North America owns just isn't cutting it anymore). So how does one exactly transition from a mass produced, traditional product (aka a pill) to something that not only costs more, is more difficult to make and more complicated to take (aka injected)?

Enter GSC's Biologic Management Policy. It is part of what the drug aficionados like to call a two-tiered formulary which is basically a fancy phrase for "first try this, then try that". So what happens is, that a plan member who has a medical condition that biologics are used for will have to try a drug assigned to Tier 1. If that doesn't work, or makes the plan member sick, then one of those fancy biologics in Tier 2 is tried next.

This way, the most cost-effective and safe drug is eligible first before moving on to the biologic, aka the Birkin bag of the Drug World.

RANDOM, *Somewhat* USEFUL STATISTIC

**TAKING 50%
OF YOUR MEDICATION IS
0% EFFECTIVE** (*Drugs don't work if you
don't take them!*) 

BE SOCIAL WITH US!



BE OUR FRIEND?



TWEET US



JOIN OUR NETWORK



DARN GOOD HEALTH ADVICE:

Contrary to popular belief, just because you're eating it in a wrap doesn't mean it's going to eliminate your body fat forever.

**But if you want to go light on the carbs, a wrap once in a while isn't such a bad idea...or just eat a salad.*