

January 28th, 2009

A study commissioned by the Dietary Supplement Education Alliance (DSEA) shows that over the next five years, appropriate use of select dietary supplements would improve the health of key populations and save the nation more than \$24 billion in healthcare costs

SELECT SUPPLEMENTS COULD SAVE \$24 BILLION IN HEALTH CARE COSTS

A research study conducted by the Lewin Group examined four supplement/disease combinations and their estimated cost effects. Four supplements with thoroughly available scientific literature were selected: calcium with vitamin D, folic acid, omega-3 fatty acids, and lutein with zeaxanthin. Key study findings are detailed below.

Calcium with Vitamin D: Appropriate use of calcium with vitamin D for the mature population shows potential reductions of approximately 776,000 hospitalizations for hip fractures over five years. The five-year estimated net cost associated with avoidable hospitalization for hip fracture is approximately \$16.1 billion.

Folic Acid: If just 25% of American women who are of childbearing age and not taking folic acid, began taking 400 mcg. of folic acid daily, neural tube defects could be prevented in as many as 600 babies. This could result in savings of nearly 350,000,000 the first year. Over five years \$1.4 billion could potentially be saved with daily folic acid supplementation.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Due to its actions in reducing the occurrence of coronary heart disease (CHD), daily intake of approximately 1,800 mg of omega-3 could save \$3.2 billion through avoidance of about 375,000 hospitalizations in the 65 and over age group.

Lutein with Zeaxanthin: Loss of central vision caused by age-related macular degeneration results in numerous elderly becoming dependent on the community or a nursing facility. The researchers used over 15 years of research on lutein and zeaxanthin to estimate a potential net savings of \$3.6 billion dollars over the next five years. Approximately 190,927 individuals could avoid the transition to dependence during this time through daily intake of 6-10 mg of lutein and zeaxanthin.

< DaVanzo JE, Dobson A, et al. (2007) Effect of Selected Dietary Supplements on Health Care Reduction – Study Update. Falls Church, VA: The Lewin Group >