

# Methods

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*Express Scripts 2006 Drug Trend Report*

## Methods

The analyses presented in the *2006 Drug Trend Report* are based on prescription-drug use for two samples of approximately 3 million unique individuals each, one for 2005 and one for 2006. Plan sponsors included in the samples:

- Maintained eligibility data for individual members in both 2005 and 2006
- Used Express Scripts for both participating pharmacy and Home-Delivery services
- Offered a funded benefit (the plan sponsor providing the pharmacy benefit paid at least some portion of the cost for prescriptions dispensed to its members)

Medicaid recipients and Medicare beneficiaries receiving prescription-drug benefits through Medicare Part D plans or Managed Medicare Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs) were excluded from this study because of their unique demographics and medication-coverage policies.

In a departure from previous *Drug Trend Reports*, cost data in this Report are expressed on an ingredient-cost basis corresponding to the actual contracted rates Express Scripts charges its clients. Dispensing fees, administrative fees, member contributions and rebates are not included in the calculation of cost.

As was the case in earlier *Drug Trend Reports*, prescription counts have been converted to equivalent quantities that would have been dispensed through participating pharmacies to adjust for differential Home-Delivery use rates and varying benefit structures. Medications sold over the counter and prescriptions dispensed in inpatient settings are not included in this analysis. Trends are reported and discussion presented for two separate groupings of drugs: nonspecialty drugs and usually expensive medications requiring special handling and patient care — commonly referred to as specialty drugs.

To establish variable utilization patterns across the spectrum of medications used by members sampled for the *2006 Drug Trend Report*, medications were categorized into therapy classes, which are groups of pharmaceutical agents that are related, either chemically or therapeutically. For nonspecialty drugs, therapy classes were defined by the first two digits of the 14-digit Generic Product Identifier (GPI) code maintained by the MediSpan division of Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc. For specialty drugs, therapy classes were defined by the most common indication for which the drugs are prescribed.

