

# HEALTHWORKS

A publication of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance Health Task Force in partnership with the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation

**Good news!**  
There may be ways to reduce your prescription costs:

employer

## WELLNESS PROFILE:

### Lumber Liquidators

From “This Old House” to HGTV — connoisseurs of popular television home and garden shows are no strangers to Lumber Liquidators, the nation’s largest independent retailer specializing in hardwood flooring. What local viewers may not know is that *Virginia Business* ranks the Toano-based corporation as one of the Commonwealth’s “Fantastic Fifty” business enterprises and, that the company is on a mission to improve the health of its more than 800 employees nationwide.

According to Corporate Benefits Manager Lynn Ellis, “Our strategy is to encourage employees to embrace healthy eating habits, increase physical activity and monitor their health in a smoke-free environment. Our company offers

**“The new health initiative is a win for company and employees alike.”**

Lumber Liquidators

employees flu clinics with free blood pressure screenings. Here in Toano, home to some 280 employees, we are piloting a voluntary initiative that includes an onsite 17-week Weight Watchers® program, healthy food selections in vending machines, a fitness center and a walking path. Weight Watchers participants are reimbursed 25% of the \$186 participation fee when they attend weekly meetings at lunchtime.”

The results have been impressive — the 25 people in the first Weight Watchers class have lost over 300 pounds! Participating staff report their blood pressure is down and a “Walk For Your Health” program is available to keep staff on the move.

Employees can be seen enjoying seasonal fruits and salads from vending machines, as well as low calorie frozen entrees. Tuna kits, fruit cups and low calorie drinks are also a big hit. Spring water is provided by the company .

Ellis adds, “We are in the early stages of monitoring the success of these initiatives to determine what will translate well into our 160 retail stores nationwide.

For our store employees, we plan to offer the Weight Watchers program online. In addition, the company currently pays 100% of medical insurance premiums for core medical plans offered to full-time staff. Lumber Liquidators seeks to offer worksite wellness programs that in the long term will have a positive impact on medical plan costs and on employee health. We recognize the importance of a healthy workforce that is able to deliver great customer service in a competitive business environment.” **HW**



Employees can enjoy low calorie frozen entrees from company vending machines.

- The physician’s office may have free samples to give you. However, these samples are a way to evaluate side effects and effectiveness before buying the drug and therefore only a temporary fix.
- Drug stores and other retailers are actively competing by lowering prescription prices. Some are offering incentives to transfer prescriptions, but be aware — by “hopping” between different pharmacies, you lose the benefit of a long-term relationship with a pharmacist who can help coordinate your drug care.
- Most insurance plans include a prescription drug plan with a co-pay. Typically, coverage is offered at different levels, or tiers. Your co-pay for a generic drug is lower than a co-pay for a preferred drug (for which the insurer has negotiated a preferred price), which is lower than the highest tier. If you’re taking a drug in the highest co-pay tier, ask your doctor to recommend a less expensive alternative.
- If you’re taking medicine for a chronic condition, your plan may have a mail-order system which is convenient and may be less expensive.

### Find Food Savings Online!



[www.farmfreshsupermarkets.com](http://www.farmfreshsupermarkets.com)  
[www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com](http://www.williamsburgfarmersmarket.com)

If you know of a successful employer wellness program, please contact Kerry Mellette, Chair of the Health Task Force at [kmellette@wchf.com](mailto:kmellette@wchf.com).



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# HEALTH ADVISOR:

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According to experts, the inability to access needed medications because of high prices is a serious public health issue. You may be tempted to save money by not filling your prescriptions, but this may put your health at risk now and set you up for higher medical expenses in the future. If you are prescribed a drug and paying for it is a problem, tell your physician — he or she would prefer to know that you can't afford it, and may be able to help.

Ask your doctor if there is a generic alternative. Almost all drugs have one, containing the same active ingredients as

the brand-name drug. Even when a particular brand drug has no generic equivalent, a very similar member of the same drug class may be available. Instead of asking, "Is there a generic replacement for this drug?" ask, "Is there a generic drug to treat the problem?" Or maybe an over-the-counter (OTC) drug would be appropriate. Check out Consumer Reports® *Best Buy Drugs*, which provides free guidance for consumers on prescription medicines.

Your doctor can also refer you to an appropriate program to help, such as a pharmaceutical company Patient Assistance Program (PAP). For more information on PAPs, which offer free or low-cost medicines to people in need, contact the Partnership for Prescription

**"Almost every drug company has some type of program to help patients afford their prescriptions."**

Assistance by phone, toll-free, at 1.888.4PPA.NOW (1.888.477.2669), or visit their website (pparx.org). Almost every drug company has some type of program to help patients.

What should you avoid? Experts recommend against buying online from foreign countries. There are potential safety risks — the FDA has not reviewed the safety and effectiveness. In addition, identity and potency are not assured. You should not split tablets without first discussing it with your physician. Neither should you skip dosages or wait to refill a prescription. The bottom line — if you're having trouble paying for a prescription, talk to your doctor or pharmacist. **HW**

## What is GWMAP?

GWMAP, or the Greater Williamsburg Medication Access Program, connects uninsured, low-income, chronically ill patients with access to the free\* drug programs (PAPs) offered by pharmaceutical companies. Since its beginning in May 2005, GWMAP has helped over 4,000 patients with over 40,000 prescription requests, valued at almost \$15 million. Funded by Williamsburg Community Health Foundation and administered by the Virginia Health Care Foundation, it helps eligible area residents obtain free medications to better manage their illnesses and improve their quality of life.

Almost every drug company has some sort of program to help patients. These Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs) vary in paperwork requirements,

\*Some sites may add a very low handling fee.

income level eligibility, etc. GWMAP funds six local clinics at seven sites to hire Medication Access Caseworkers (MACs) to help patients take advantage of these PAPs. The clinics, physicians and MACs work as a team to provide coordinated support to patients. Patient information is kept strictly confidential.

Because they are provided access to needed prescription medications at no cost, chronically ill patients from Charles City County, Gloucester County, James City County, King and Queen County, King William County, New Kent County, Poquoson, Williamsburg and York County are often able to keep working and see improved health outcomes. In the last fiscal year (May 1, 2007 – April 30, 2008), GWMAP helped 1,909 uninsured, low-income patients with 12,458 prescription requests, providing medications with an average wholesale value of \$4.3 million. **HW**



### GWMAP Sites:

- Olde Towne Medical Center
- Lackey Free Clinic
- Gloucester/Mathews Free Clinic
- Colonial Services Board
- Central Virginia Health Services (Charles City County & King William County sites)
- Northern Neck Free Clinic (Middlesex County site)



**Next Issue: Summer fitness & healthy eating ...**