



## NALC 68th biennial convention

**D**uring the next few months, we will be wrapping up our final preparations for the Health Benefit Plan's workshops at the 68th NALC biennial convention. Although we will not be hosting a breakfast workshop as in previous years, we have added two classes that we feel will benefit and educate all attending delegates. Please keep in mind that one class will be specifically designed for all branch officers, and a separate class will be presented for any/all delegates who would like to attend. Whether you currently are a part of the NALC Health Benefit Plan, or would like some more information before deciding to enroll, we hope you will take some time to join us.

If you have any questions about the classes, please contact Beth or Carmella at 888-636-NALC (6252). Please see below for a tentative workshop schedule.

### Workshop 1: Branch officer HBP workshop

**Date:** Monday, July 23

**Time:** 2:15 to 4:15 p.m.

**Registration fee:** None

**Note:** Registration is *required*; however, no fee will be assessed.

### Workshop 2: HBP workshop for all attendees

**Date:** Thursday, July 26

**Time:** 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.

**Registration fee:** None

**Note:** Registration and fee will *not* be required for this workshop.

## Important generic drug launches

As a way to help manage your out-of-pocket cost for prescriptions, the NALC Health Benefit Plan and CVS Caremark encourage the use of generic medications as first-line therapy whenever appropriate. Use of generic medications can offer a safe way to meet your prescription drug needs and, again, lower your out-of-pocket expenses for prescriptions.

As I have previously let you know, the color, shape and some inactive ingredients in generic prescriptions might be different, but generic drugs must contain the same key ingredient and prove to be equivalent in order to receive approval from the FDA. Although the cost difference can be dramatic, generic drugs are pharmacologi-

cally identical to their brand-name versions. The FDA requires that generic drugs be as safe and effective as brand-name drugs.

In saying that, I would like to highlight a few prescription drugs that have recently been added, or may soon be available in a generic form:

The brand-name drug **Plavix**, indicated to reduce the rate of thrombotic vascular events in patients with acute coronary syndrome, and reduce the rate of thrombotic vascular events in patients with recent heart attack, stroke or established peripheral arterial disease, will soon be available in a generic form. Generic **Clopidogrel** was anticipated to be available on May 17. (Please keep in mind that at the time this article was sent to print, we could only give an anticipated launch date of May 17.) If the (projected) U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) launch date was accurate, generic versions of the 75 mg strength of Clopidogrel should be available from multiple suppliers, including Caremark mail-service pharmacies, on May 17. The 75 mg strength of Clopidogrel constitutes the majority of Plavix brand sales.

**Lexapro** is indicated for the acute and maintenance treatment of major depressive disorder in adults and adolescents 12 to 17 years of age, and the acute treatment of generalized anxiety disorder in adults. **Escitalopram**, the generic equivalent of Lexapro, was launched on March 1 and is now being dispensed by CVS Caremark mail-service pharmacies.

**Boniva** is indicated for the treatment and prevention of osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. Effective March 19, Boniva has a generic equivalent, **Ibandronate**. It is available through CVS Caremark mail-service pharmacies in 150 mg tablets.

Since member response to having **Atorvastatin** (generic **Lipitor**) added to the 2012 NALC Preferred Drug List has been so positive, I am pleased to announce that a 90-day supply will continue to be available for \$7.99 through Dec. 31 when purchased through our Caremark mail-order program, or through our Maintenance Choice Program available at CVS pharmacies and Longs Drugs. If Medicare Part B is the primary payer, you will continue to pay just \$4 for a 90-day supply through Dec. 31. ☒