

Update on the TRS Personalized Medicine Program

TRS is proud to report that over 8,000 of the 37,000 Medicare Eligible Health Plan (MEHP) retirees and spouses have volunteered to have their DNA reviewed to determine if the prescription drugs they are taking are being appropriately metabolized by their body. TRS continues its personalized medicine pharmacogenomics program with Coriell Life Sciences (CLS) and the Know Your Rx Coalition. This leading-edge program improves the wellness of its participants, helping them avoid taking ineffective medications that could be harmful, while potentially saving the participants and the retirement system on medical costs. Before the second year of the program, TRS saw:

- DNA testing results that led to a recommended medication change for 28% of participants.
- A 14% reduction in medical spending for those involved.
- Medical costs for a control group not in the program increased 3.2%.
- 87% of medication change recommendations being accepted by the prescriber, a 22% reduction in hospitalizations and a 27% reduction in slip and fall accidents.

As the program has gained more experience, a review of medical claims data showed a savings of \$219 per member per month over what otherwise would have been spent, which equates to \$7,000 per member over the first 32 months. This is a return on investment of 1,422%.

Requests to chronicle this successful program continue at numerous conferences and national recognition for these efforts was achieved with TRS staff reporting on the initial results at the Personalized Medicine Conference hosted by the Personalized Medicine Coalition held at Harvard Medical School and a conference at the National Institutes of Health in Maryland.

Debunking Myths Surrounding the DNA Program

In meeting with retired teachers, TRS staff members still get many good questions and interest about this program. One of the most common questions is, “what will be done with my DNA results?” TRS Kentucky does not house this genetic data in any format. Your saliva kit is mailed directly to one of CLS’s certified labs. Those results are sent directly to CLS and used to create a medication risk report with their proprietary GeneDose LIVE software. Then, the medication risk report is sent directly to the coalition pharmacists at Know Your Rx in Lexington. These pharmacists study your personalized results from CLS, and then make a confidential phone call to you to discuss the medication therapy management recommendations. After this conversation, a medication action plan (MAP) detailing any proposed changes discussed is mailed to you (the patient). The MAP also is shared with the your doctor in a method of your choosing (for example, the pharmacist can fax it to a doctor’s office, or the patient may choose to share it in person).

Another common question is, “will TRS use this information to determine any genetic predisposition for cancer or other diseases?” The answer is no. The goal of this program is to see if you are getting benefit from the drugs that are prescribed to you. TRS does not look at ancestry or any genetic predispositions. The role of the TRS insurance team is to make sure that all eligible retirees have valuable health insurance coverage. A part of that is ensuring the drugs you

take actually work for you and are not harming you. Federal laws protect your genetic information, and employers and insurers cannot use this information to determine eligibility for coverage. Your eligibility for TRS health coverage is based on your years of service to Kentucky's children.

On a Personal Note: My DNA Testing Experience — Jane Cheshire Gilbert

I also took the DNA test because I wanted to have the same experience as the 8,000 retired teachers (though as a non-member, I had to pay for it out-of-pocket). I am one of the 30% of the national population where my liver will not appropriately metabolize the No. 1-selling blood thinner on the current drug market. Should I ever need a blood thinner, this is important information to have. I also learned that a drug that I have been taking for almost 20 years is the only drug in that therapeutic category that will be appropriately metabolized by my body. I wish I had known this to begin with because it took me over two years of trial-and-error prescribing with my doctor to find a drug that worked for me. This program could have told me right away which drug was right for me and which one wasn't.

Are You Too Late to Participate?

Absolutely not. The test is free to those retirees on the MEHP. For those on the KEHP, you may use funds that you have accumulated on your health reimbursement account (Health Equity card) through one of the KEHP Consumer Driven Health Plans or pay with cash or with credit card. Many KEHP retirees use these funds for eyeglasses, prescription copayments, and, now, it can be used for a once-in-a-lifetime DNA test, at a cost of \$360.

Call CLS at 888-454-9024 or go online at www.coriell.com/trs to request a DNA kit be sent to the privacy of your own home.