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Fortune 500s Waste Over \$500 Million a Year on Unnecessary Back Surgeries for Workers

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Over \$1.5 Billion Lost in Worker Productivity Says Two-Year Findings

PEMBROKE, Mass.--(Business Wire)--

Fortune 500s spend over \$500 million a year on avoidable back surgeries for their workers and lose as much as \$1.5 billion in indirect costs associated with these procedures in the form of missed work and lost productivity, according to a two-year study by Consumer's Medical Resource (CMR).

CMR's study, "Back Surgery: A Costly Fortune 500 Burden," found one out of three workers recommended for back surgery by their doctor said they avoided an unnecessary procedure after being given independent, high-quality medical research on their diagnosed condition and treatment options. In addition, those patients that refused surgery and opted for alternative and less invasive procedures to treat their back pain reported healthier and more personally satisfying outcomes.

The study was conducted by CMR, the leader in medical decision support (MDS(TM)), based on survey responses and interviews with 300 Fortune 500 employees diagnosed with one of six major medical conditions, such as low back pain (LBP) in which treatment options vary significantly.

"Back Surgery: A Costly Fortune 500 Burden" examined how the quality of patient decision-making changed when workers were presented with independent, comprehensive, and personalized medical research on their diagnosed condition. This included being fully informed of all options, outcomes, benefits and risks before making a treatment decision with a doctor. CMR's findings revealed total direct cost savings for avoided surgery for a sample group of 100 back patients to be \$1 million.

"Our research concludes Fortune 500 companies are wasting \$500 million each year from more than 13,000 unnecessary back surgeries performed on their employees in the U.S. each year," said David Hines, president and founder of CMR. "Productivity losses associated with back surgery indicate the figure is exponentially higher. We estimate these companies are losing \$1.5 billion in worker productivity, as well."

CMR also studied workers recommended for surgery with physician-confirmed diagnoses of breast cancer, prostate cancer, endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and arthritis in the knee or hip to discover how their treatment decisions were affected when better educated on their medical conditions and treatment options.

According to experts, back pain ranks second only to headaches as the most frequent pain people experience. It is the most common cause of job-related disability and a leading contributor to missed work. According to various sources, as many as 100 million working days are lost each year due to back pain. Although back procedures are high volume, high cost surgeries, some studies comparing surgical and non-surgical treatment outcomes have shown little difference between the two approaches. The average cost of back surgery in the U.S. is \$36,000 to \$38,200.

"Unnecessary surgeries and rising health care costs will continue until patients are better informed about their medical options," added Hines. "By supporting employees to become truly informed health care consumers Fortune 500s can contribute the greatest benefit to their workers and to their bottom-line."

About Consumer's Medical Resource (CMR)

Consumer's Medical Resource (CMR) introduced Medical Decision Support (MDS(TM)) to the American marketplace 12 years ago. CMR is the first company in the U.S. to provide Fortune 500, and large company employees, access to real-time, interactive, objective, and highly customized medical information on serious and complicated illnesses and treatment options. Unlike any other medical information provider, CMR is staffed by leading physicians from Top 5 medical schools and researchers from the clinical perspective who draw upon the latest advances in medical research and technology to equip patients to be fully informed and involved health care consumers. The company has been featured in leading books and the national media for its innovations in corporate health care. CMR is headquartered in Pembroke, Mass. For more information on CMR, visit the company's website at www.consumersmedical.com.

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