

West Virginia Tops List of Per Capita Prescription Drug Usage

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CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. -- A report shows Tennessee has lost the top national ranking of per capita prescription drug use to West Virginia.

The report by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Tennessee shows West Virginia took the lead, with 17.4 prescriptions per capita in 2006, compared with 16.9 prescriptions per person in Tennessee.

The report uses data from drug company Novartis' most recent Pharmacy Benefit Report.

Tennessee's rates dropped 6.6 percent from 18.1 prescriptions in 2004. The drug use rates remain well above the national average, which was 11.8 prescriptions per capita in 2006, the Blue Cross report shows.

Terry Shea, director of pharmacy management for BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, said older, sicker and less educated populations tend to use more prescriptions.

West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment Wednesday.