

**THURSDAY  
FEBRUARY 22  
LCHE  
SEMINAR**

The Lausanne Center for Health Economics, Behavior, and Policy launches its regular seminar series. More details on [www.lche.ch](http://www.lche.ch).

**TIME : 15.30-16.30**

**LOCATION:** Salle Baker, Bâtiment Proline (Station Vennes)  
rte de la Corniche 10, 1010 Lausanne

## A Prescription for Knowledge: Patient Information and Generic Substitution

### SPEAKER

■ NICOLAS SCHREINER

Dr. Nicolas Schreiner is a research economist at and the deputy director of the CSS Institute for Empirical Health Economics, as well as a research fellow at the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Basel.

### ABSTRACT

We study how informing patients about the availability of generic drugs influencing their purchasing decisions for prescription drugs. Exploiting the dissemination of 60,000 targeted informational letters by a large Swiss health insurer as a novel natural experiment and using detailed claim-level data, we find that informing brand purchasers about generic alternatives increases the probability of generic substitution fourfold. The effect does not substantially depend on whether patients face a copayment. Our results highlight the limits of health-care policies that rely solely on financial incentives.