

Low Cost Options for Prescription Drugs

Do you take prescription drugs? Does your health plan cover prescription drugs? The programs listed here offer free or discount programs for people with low or modest income. You must meet the program's eligibility requirements to qualify.

Manufacturer Programs for Free Prescription Drugs

Limited prescription drugs are available free or with a small co-payment. Often the doctor who writes the prescription must contact the drug company to provide information about you and your prescription. The Internet sites tell you and your doctor which pharmaceutical companies offer assistance programs, the prescription drugs covered by each program, how to make a request for assistance and the program's eligibility criteria. Usually the drug company delivers a three-month supply to your doctor. You or your doctor may need to reapply periodically to continue receiving the prescriptions.

Paper and Internet-Based Directories

Benefits CheckUp

This web site helps you determine if you qualify for any government or private programs that provide lower cost prescription drugs.

Internet: www.benefitscheckup.org

Partnership for Prescription Assistance

This Internet resource states it is a "single point of access to more than 475 public and private patient assistance programs, including over 180 programs offered by pharmaceutical companies." Click on "What is the Partnership for Prescription Assistance more about this program link" and then click on "View a List of Participating Programs" to see the list of the companies offering prescription drugs, the programs that you may qualify for, the products covered by the programs, and to download applications for the programs. You can also click at the top of the home page on "Patient Click Here to Start" to enter the prescriptions you are looking for. Download the "Directory of PhRMA Member Company Patient Assistance Programs" or request a printed copy by calling the phone number below.

Call: 1-888-477-2669

Internet: www.pparx.org/Intro.php

NeedyMeds.com

This resource provides information on programs that offer lower priced drugs. Under Patient Assistance Programs, click on Generic Name List or Brand Name List to see if your drug is listed and which programs may be available to you. Click on Company List and it lists companies that have and that do not have prescription assistance programs.

Internet: www.needymeds.com

RxAssist

You need to register with them on-line to use their site to locate patient assistance programs. Search their database of prescription drugs by drug name or the name of the company that manufactures your drug. Some requests may be completed on line. Their web site is updated daily and they state they are the Web's "most current and comprehensive directory of patient assistance programs." See their "Frequently Asked Questions about Patient Assistance Programs" for a more detailed explanation of how these programs work. Sponsored by Volunteers in Health Care and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Call: 1-877-844-8442 or 401-729-3284 Internet: www.rxassist.org

RxOutreach

Developed by Express Scripts Specialty Distribution Services, Inc. to provide generic prescription drugs to low income people of all ages.

Internet: www.rxoutreach.com

Together RX Access Program is sponsored by 21 pharmaceutical companies. You apply for a free card and get a savings of 20-40% on some prescriptions from these companies. They decide which prescriptions will be available through this program. There are eligibility requirements.

Call: 1-800-444-4106

Internet: www.togetherrxaccess.com

Manufacturer Patient Assistant Programs

Glaxo SmithKline

Call: 1-888-825-5249

Internet: www.bridgestoaccess.gsk.com for non-oncology prescriptions

Internet: www.commitmentoaccess.gsk.com for oncology prescriptions

Merck Prescription Discount Program

Call: 1-800-506-3725

Internet: www.merck.com/merckhelps

Merck Patient Assistance Program

Call: 1-800-727-5400

Internet: www.merck.com/merckhelps

Novartis

Call: 1-800-277-2254

Internet: <http://www.pharma.us.novartis.com/novartis/pap/pap.jsp>

Pfizer

Call: 1-866-776-3700

Internet: www.pfizerhelpfulanswers.com

FEDERAL and STATE

Medicare Part D. Medicare approves companies to sell Medicare Part D prescription coverage to Medicare enrollees. The Medicare web site lists plans for your area. These plans must cover certain drugs. Do the plans you are considering cover your drugs? Enrollees pay a premium to the health plan providing this prescription coverage. Low income enrollees may be eligible for assistance in paying these premiums. Medicare enrollees need to sign up within a certain time period of being eligible or must pay a late penalty the rest of the time they are enrolled.

Call Medicare at 1-800-633-4227 (1-800-MEDICARE) www.medicare.gov

Call the Senior LinkAge Line® 1-800-333-2433 www.mnaging.org

State health programs. Medical assistance (MA), general assistance (GAMC), and MinnesotaCare cover prescription drugs. You may have co-pays. You must meet income and asset requirements. Contact your county human services agency.

(Please Note: The Prescription Drug Program offered through the Minnesota Department of Human Services ended Dec. 31, 2005 when the Medicare Part D program became available.)

OTHER SOURCES OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

RxConnect is a free service that helps callers locate programs for the prescription drugs they need. Most of these programs have eligibility requirements. They review the eligibility requirements with the caller and provide applications for that particular program. This service is provided by the Minnesota Board on Aging through the Senior LinkAge Line®.

Call: 1-800-333-2433

Minnesota RxConnect is the state of Minnesota Web site which helps Minnesotans make informed decisions regarding accessing prescription drugs at a lower price. One section of the web site is called Minnesota Rx Price Compare. It compares local pharmacy prices for about 400 brand, generic, and therapeutic alternative medicines. You can search by city, county, zip code. Not all pharmacies list prices for all drugs. Another section of the web site is called Order Your Medicine from Canada. It lists a step-by-step process to access these prescription drugs and includes first-time customer application forms and a list of available drugs and their prices.

www.MinnesotaRxConnect.com

Your Health Plan may offer a prescription drug benefit, a drug discount program, or a mail order drug program. Call customer services/member services at your health plan. This phone number usually appears on the back of your health plan card.

Veterans (including non-service connected conditions) may receive medications prescribed by a VA physician. You may need to meet income and net worth requirements and/or pay a co-payment for each 30-day supply. (This program does not replace your health plan coverage.) Contact your VA health care facility or call toll free at 1-877-222-8387 or visit the Internet at: www.va.gov/elig

Retired military personnel 65 years and older, (enrolled in Part B Medicare) now have retail and mail order drug benefits under TRICARE with a small copayment. Call TRICARE for Life at 1-866-773-0404.

Internet: www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/tmop.cfm

Note that TRICARE for Minnesotans is called TRIWest.

Call TRIWest at 1-888-874-9378. Internet: www.triwest.com

Some organizations sponsor prescription drug discount programs. Some require a membership fee to be eligible for the discount:

- AARP: 1-800-456-2277 (press 0) or www.aarp-pharmacy.com
- Peoples Prescription Plan: 1-800-566-0003 or www.peoplesrxcard.com/about.lasso

Minnesota Department of Health, Managed Care Systems Section

Minnesota Health Information Clearinghouse
P.O. Box 64882
St. Paul, MN 55164-0882

651-201-5100 800-657-3916 TDD: 651-201-5797

Upon request, this information will be made available in alternative format such as large print, Braille or cassette tape. Call 651-201-5100