GUIDE TO INEXPENSIVE PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of participating in this activity, the participant will be able to......

- Identify multiple sources of inexpensive prescription medication information for patients
- Identify why providing such information is important to one’s medical practice
RESOURCES

- Patient Assistance Programs
- 340B
- Private organizations
- Pharmacy discount programs
PAPs are often sponsored by pharmaceutical companies.

Each PAP has its own eligibility rules.
- Patients may need to show that they don't qualify for private or public insurance
- Patients may also need to meet income criteria and provide proof of income

Each PAP has its own application process.
- The doctor, nurse or social worker may need to apply for the patient
- For some programs, the application is online. For others, the application must be mailed.

It's important to keep in mind that applying for a PAP does not guarantee that the patient will get medicine for free or at a lower price.
www.PPARx.org

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance

- Helps qualifying patients who lack prescription coverage get the medicines they need through the public or private program that's right for them

- Many will get them free or nearly free

- To access the Partnership for Prescription Assistance by phone, you can call toll-free

1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669)
www.TogetherRxAccess.com
The Together Rx Access Program
 can help those with no prescription drug coverage and are not eligible for Medicare
 most cardholders save 25% to 40% on brand-name prescription drugs and products, and savings on generic medicines are also available.
 the card can be used at the majority of pharmacies.

www.needymeds.com
This web site gives information about PAPs
 lists drugs that are available through PAPs and gives contact information
 provides downloadable copies of a drug company’s PAP application
 free drug discount card to receive up to 80%
 links to state Medicaid Web sites.
**PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**www.RxHope.com**
- On the RxHope site, the doctor can apply for free or low-cost drugs from the companies that make them.

**www.rxassist.org**
- The rxassist site has a searchable database and provides information on PAP eligibility criteria.
- It also gives information about other resources, such as drug discount programs.
340B Drug Pricing Program

- Requires manufacturers to provide outpatient drugs to eligible health care organizations/covered entities at significantly reduced prices.

- Enables covered entities to reach more eligible patients and provide more comprehensive services.
Community Health Centers (FQHC)
AIDS clinics and drug purchasing programs
Black Lung Clinics
Hemophilia Treatment Centers
Urban Indian Clinics Tribal Centers
Family Planning Clinics
Sexually Transmitted Disease Clinics
Tuberculosis Clinics
Native Hawaiian Health Center
Federally Qualified Health Center look-a-likes
Certain Disproportionate Share Hospitals
PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS

- Salvation Army
- Private hospitals
- Churches
- Free clinics
- Community health centers
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Other community programs

To use these services, patients may need to show that they don't qualify for private health insurance or that they don't make enough money to pay for their own medicine.
Food City
- **Discount:** Hundreds of generic drugs only $4.00. $9.99 and $15.00 on select quantities.
- **What’s covered:** 5,000 brand and generic drugs.
- **Membership:** $10 sign-up fee and $10 annual fee per family.
- **Who is covered:** All are covered.
- **Bonus:** 20% discount on flu shots. Select men's and women's health medications for just $9.99. $15.00 oral contraceptives. Select smoking cessation patches for discounted price.

CVS Pharmacy
- **Discount:** $11.99 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** More than 400 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** $15 annual enrollment fee per person.
- **Who is covered:** People not using insurance.
- **Bonus:** CVS’s Health Savings Pass gives 10% off on flu shots and visits to CVS’s MinuteClinic retail health clinics.
**Pharmacy Discount Programs**

**Kmart**
- **Discount:** As low as $5 for a 30-day supply or $10 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** More than 500 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** $10 annual enrollment fee for individuals and households.
- **Who is covered:** All are covered.
- **Bonus:** Join Kmart’s Pharmacy Savings Club and get discounts on hundreds of generic (5 to 35%) and brand-name drugs (5 to 20%). Discounts on immunizations.

**Kroger**
- **Discount:** $4 for a 30-day supply or $10 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** About 300 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** No fee.
- **Who is covered:** All are covered.
- **Bonus:** Earn points toward purchasing discounted gasoline at Kroger fuel centers and participating Shell stations. Prescriptions paid for by Medicaid or Medicare do not qualify.
Pharmacy Discount Programs

Rite Aid Pharmacy
- **Discount:** $8.99 for a 30-day supply or $15.99 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** More than 500 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** No fee.
- **Who is covered:** People not using insurance or publicly funded health-care programs.
- **Bonus:** Rite Aid’s Rx Savings Program has discounts on thousands of specified drugs (such as 15 to 20% off for uninsured or underinsured).

Target
- **Discount:** $4 for a 30-day supply or $10 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** More than 200 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** No fee.
- **Who is covered:** All are covered.
- **Bonus:** Use Target’s discount generic program to earn 5% off all Target purchases made on a single day after filling five eligible prescriptions at the pharmacy.
Walgreens
- **Discount:** $11.99 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** More than 400 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** $20 annual enrollment fee per person or $35 annual enrollment fee per family.
- **Who is covered:** People not enrolled in a publicly funded health-care program.
- **Bonus:** Walgreens’ Prescription Savings Club has discounts on more than 8,000 brand-name and all generic medications, 10% off flu shots.

Walmart
- **Discount:** $4 for a 30-day supply or $10 for a 90-day supply.
- **What’s covered:** About 300 generic drugs.
- **Membership:** No fee.
- **Who is covered:** All are covered.
- **Bonus:** Participate in Walmart’s Retail Prescription Program and you’ll receive free shipping options, so you won’t even need to go to the store.
Most PAPs are designed to require the participation of the physician and office staff at several stages of the process. You may be required to:

- write the prescription,
- determine whether that drug is offered through a PAP,
- verify the patient's eligibility,
- obtain an original application form from the drug company,
- fill out significant portions of a lengthy application,
- get the patient to fill out his or her portion and provide any necessary documentation,
- mail the form,
- receive delivery of the medication,
- dispense it to the patient properly,

And then start the whole process over again when the patient's 30-day supply is gone.
STREAMLINING

- Develop a limited PAP drug formulary. Pick a few meds you frequently prescribe for diabetes and hypertension, for example.

- Some drugs are just easier to obtain from PAPs than others. When you learn which drugs those are for your clients, focus on them.
STREAMLINING

• Become familiar with the process for requesting medications on your PAP formulary and focus your efforts on streamlining that process instead of constantly starting from scratch.

• A similar approach is getting to know the PAP (or PAPs) of one pharmaceutical company very well. Get to know one or two companies and then expand from there.
Streamlining

- Give some thought to who in your office will oversee the process.

- In some areas, local organizations will help eligible patients fill out the necessary paperwork for PAPs.
  
  If this is not the case in your area, you might consider creating a **volunteer position** in your practice to assist patients in applying for PAPs and deal with the administrative responsibilities.
Optimally, your role is providing information and guidance to empower your patient to do his or her part.

Develop a packet of information for patients that let them know what they need to provide in the application process.

You may find that patients who take an active role in applying for assistance through a PAP are more invested in complying with their treatment regimen.
Helping low-income patients access the prescription drugs they need can be a complicated and frustrating endeavor. The last thing you need in your practice is added hassle, so why bother?

- Helping your low-income patients access needed prescription drugs doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing effort. Even offering assistance on a small scale can yield benefits for them and you.

- You can add value to your practice. It's a patient service that will help you retain and satisfy your patients and attract new patients.

- Finally, think about this effort as an extension of your mission as a family physician.
“The question that I would pose to someone who asks ‘Why bother?’ is what good do your diagnostics and treatment do if the person can't afford the medications? If someone has hypertension and can't afford their anti-hypertensives, everything you say is worthless. Yes, there are also lifestyle issues, but if patients can't afford their medication, you're doing them no good.”

A quote from Richard J. Sagall, MD, one of the co-founders of NeedyMeds
REFERENCES


- [http://www.vhcf.org/looking-for-help/prescription-medicine-access/](http://www.vhcf.org/looking-for-help/prescription-medicine-access/)
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