

Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

This is basic information and
does not constitute legal advice

Tips for People with Prescriptions: Medicine Assistance Programs

What are medicine assistance programs?

Medicine assistance programs are programs that help you pay for your prescriptions. These programs may be able to help you if you:

- have a low income
- either do not have insurance or you do not have enough insurance
- need prescriptions; and
- meet any other eligibility requirements.

Each program is provided by different organizations, such as community health centers, pharmacies, and private pharmaceutical companies.

In choosing the most appropriate medication assistance program for you, it may be best to first contact the pharmaceutical company that manufactures the prescribed medication to find out about any discounts on the medication. You can identify the manufacturer and gather other information about your prescribed medications by visiting <http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda/index.cfm>. You should also ask your prescribing physician about any savings or coupons available to reduce the cost of the medication or if there are any less-expensive brand-name or generic drugs available.

How do I know if I am eligible for the programs?

Each program has its own requirements. You will need to contact each one to determine if you are eligible for that program. Some programs require your doctor to contact them. Generally, you must have a low income, no prescription insurance, and you must be a U.S. resident or citizen. Some programs require that you do not have health insurance.

What are drug discount cards?

Some medication assistance programs are available in the form of a drug discount card. Drug discount cards are programs that offer discounts on your medication. These cards are not

insurance. Some drug discount cards are free, and some have an enrollment fee, annual fee, or monthly fee. When using a free card, it is still important to consider the cost of your medicine; you should always do comparative shopping to make sure you are getting the best deal on the medication. Also, make sure that a generic brand isn't available that might be more inexpensive than the drug discount card. Since there are many different types of drug discount card programs, you may find it best to use certain cards for some medications and others for other medications.

When choosing a drug discount card, it is best to first ask yourself the following questions about the program:

- Is there a contact or customer service number that I can call in case of problems?
- What is the refund policy on fees?
- If I am being asked to send money, am I certain my medicine is available at a discount?
- Is the medicine I need available at no or low-cost through a patient assistance program? (Usually this would be a better option.)

Are my drugs provided through a mail-order or a walk-in pharmacy? If it's a walk-in, is there one close to me? If it is a mail-order pharmacy, are there additional handling or shipping costs?

What about Medicare Part D?

If you have Medicare Part D, which helps pay for your prescriptions, you may or may not be eligible for some medication assistance programs. In general, companies do not allow Part D enrollees who are eligible to receive the full low income subsidy (LIS or extra help) to apply for their programs. You can review the application requirements to see if you qualify or call the program to check on its policy.

What if it is determined that I do not qualify for a medicine assistance program?

A private company's medication assistance program can decide who can have medication for free. Some people are turned down for these programs for a variety of reasons. If that happens to you, ask your doctor or health care advocate to make an appeal directly to the manager of the medication assistance program that turned you down. The letter should explain exactly why you cannot afford to buy your medication. You may want to ask your doctor to follow up with a phone call. Please see the sample of an appeal letter to a medication assistance program at the end of this packet.

What are discount pharmacy services?

Some pharmacies have discount pharmacy services. These services allow you to get discounted medications. Membership may or may not be required to use these pharmacy services. Call pharmacies in your area to find out if they have discount pharmacy services. You may contact pharmacies in your area by finding the phone number in your phonebook or by searching for the pharmacy name on the Internet.

Below is information for some medication assistance programs and drug discount card programs. The information explains how the programs work and how you can apply for them. You

may want to ask a friend or family member for help to determine if you are eligible for the program and to complete the applications. You can apply for most programs using the Internet.

Medicine Assistance Programs

Partnership for Prescription Assistance (PPA)

PPA is a one-stop shop. It connects you to several public and private medication assistance programs. Once you have given your information to PPA, it can direct you to medication assistance programs that may provide free or nearly free prescriptions.

To find out if you qualify for one or more programs, you can:

- Visit the PPA website at <http://www.pparx.org>. A link to the Spanish version of the website is available, or
- Call 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-888-477-2669). Spanish and other language translators are available.
 - Either way, you will need to have a list of your prescriptions and the prescribed dosage of each. You will also need to know your estimated gross annual household income and type of health insurance and/or prescription coverage. Once you have provided this information, PPA will give you a list of medication assistance programs and tell you how to apply for them.

PPA of Nebraska

From the PPA website, you can search for the PPA program of your state. The PPA of Nebraska website works the same as the national PPA website.

To find out if you qualify for one or more programs, you can:

- Visit the PPA website at <http://www.pparxne.org>. A link to the Spanish version of the website is available, or
- Call 1-888-4PPA-NOW (1-88-477-2669). Spanish and other language translators are available.
 - Either way, you will need to have a list of your prescriptions and the prescribed dosage of each. You will also need to know your estimated gross annual household income and type of health insurance and/or prescription coverage. Once you have given this information, PPA will provide you with a list of medication assistance programs and how to apply for them. From the website, you can click on the “Resources” link for even more referrals.

Rx Assist

Rx Assist is another one-stop shop. This program can connect you to medication assistance programs created by pharmaceutical companies. You will have to visit the website (<http://www.rxassist.org>) and create a free account in order to find out if you are eligible for any medication assistance programs. Once you have an account, you can enter the name of your

prescription to find out if there is a medication assistance program to help you pay for that medication.

PatientAssistance.com

PatientAssistance.Com allows you to browse through over 1,000 medication assistance programs designed to help those in need. After signing-up for an account, you can search the website by the program's name or by the name of the prescribed medication. Once you have found the right program, you can sign-up and manage all of your applications through this site. The website also offers a free drug discount card that can save you up to 75% on prescription medication. For more information, visit <http://www.patientassistance.com>.

Rx Outreach

Rx Outreach is a medication assistance program that can help you pay for generic prescriptions. Rx Outreach offers 90- and 180-day supplies of medication for as low as \$20, depending on the medication. This program has income requirements and charges a fee to receive the medication. You can search the website for different medications you are taking to see if Rx Outreach will help pay for them.

To find out if you qualify and to receive an application, you can:

- Visit the Rx Outreach website at <http://www.rxoutreach.com>,
- Call 1-800-769-3880, or
- Request information by mail by writing to:

Rx Outreach
Express Scripts Specialty Distribution Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 66536
Saint Louis, MO 63166-6536.

The Free Medicine Program

The Free Medicine Program is a medication assistance program that charges you a one-time five dollar (\$5) processing fee for each medication that you order. This money will be refunded if the Program is unable to assist you in obtaining your prescription medication free or at a significantly-reduced cost.

To be eligible, you:

- Cannot have prescription drug coverage,
- Cannot qualify for a government or third-party program that provides prescription drug coverage, and
- Must have a limited yearly household income.

To apply for the program, you can complete the Medication Information Form on the website at <http://www.freemedicineprogram.org>. Although the Free Medicine Program is not currently taking new applicants, be sure to check back periodically to see if enrollment has re-opened.

RxHope

RxHope is a large, independent, web-based patient assistance resource that helps people obtain the critical medication they need but cannot afford. Since RxHope contracts directly with the pharmaceutical companies, it provides its services to physicians and patients free of charge. By accessing the RxHope website, you can search through the available prescriptions, fill out an application, and then send it to the pharmaceutical manufacturer for approval and shipping. Although patients can initiate the process, a doctor must help complete the application. RxHope also eases the prescription location process by listing state and federal program information for all 50 states.

To find out if you qualify, you can:

- Visit the RxHope website at <http://www.rxhope.com>,
- Call 1-877-267-0517, or
- Request information by mail by writing to:
RxHope
P.O. Box 42886
Cincinnati, OH 45242

Access2Wellness

Sponsored by Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc., this website serves as a single-entry point for a broad selection of patient assistance programs that offer more than 1,000 prescription medications, free or at a discount, to people who qualify. After selecting the prescribed medications from a list and answering some eligibility questions, you will be directed toward the assistance program that best meets your needs. In order to determine your eligibility for the programs, you should be prepared to provide information such as your age, zip code, estimated annual household income, prescription medications you are currently taking and any type of health insurance and/or prescription drug coverage.

To find out more about the Access2Wellness program, you can:

- Visit the website at <http://www.access2wellness.com>, or
- Call 1-866-317-2775.

Drug Discount Cards

The Medicine Program

This drug discount card is available to anyone who wants to lower the cost of their prescription medication. You can visit the website (www.themedicineprogram.com) to find out more about the program. From the website, you need to search using your zip code to find participating pharmacies in your area. You can also call the Medicine Program at 1-800-710-2079.

Together Rx

This drug discount card is sponsored by many of the nation's leading pharmaceutical companies. The card is free and offers a twenty-five to forty percent (25% - 40%) discount on brand-name and generic prescription drugs.

To be eligible, you:

- Cannot be eligible for Medicare,
- Cannot have prescription drug coverage,
- Must have a limited yearly household income, and
- Must be a legal U.S. resident.

To find out if you qualify, you can:

- Visit the Together Rx website at <http://www.togetherrxaccess.com/Tx/jsp/home.jsp>. A link to the Spanish version of the website is available,
- Call 1-800-444-4106, or
- Request information by mail by writing to:
Together Rx Access, LLC
PO Box 9426
Wilmington, DE 19809-9944

Merck's Prescription Discount Program

This drug discount card can help you save fifteen to twenty percent (15% - 20%) on certain Merck medicines. Enrolling in the program is free. There are no income or age requirements but you must be a legal U.S. resident to be eligible. To find out if you qualify, you can visit the Merck website at www.merckhelp.com. Please note that effective June 23, 2010, the Merck Prescription Discount Program will not be accepting new enrollments. However, the website has links to other Merck assistance programs for which you may be eligible. For more information, you can either visit the website or call Merck at 1-800-727-5400.

Pfizer's Pfizer Pfriends

This drug discount card can help you save fifteen to fifty percent (15% - 50%) on most Pfizer medicines. Enrolling in the program is free. To be eligible, you must have no prescription coverage and live in the U.S., Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands.

To find out if you qualify, you can:

- Visit the Pfizer's Pfriends website at <http://www.pfizerhelpfulanswers.com>. A link to the Spanish version of the website is available, or
- Call 1-866-706-2400

Your Rx Card

Your Rx Card offers a free drug discount card that can save you up to 75% on all FDA-approved drugs at 57,000 pharmacies nationwide. After creating a card through the website at www.yourrxcard.com, you can print it out and then bring it with you to the pharmacy to take advantage of the plan's savings. The discounts vary and can range anywhere from 0% - 75%

depending on the type of prescription, brand name, generic name and the location of the specific pharmacy. You can use the “medication pricing” and “pharmacy locator” links on the homepage to search for prescribed medication by name or to locate pharmacies near you.

To find out more about the program, you can:

- Visit the website at <http://www.yourrxcard.com>, or
- Call 1-866-561-1926.

Drug Card America

Drug Card America is a drug discount card program that offers up to 50% savings on prescription drugs at over 45,000 pharmacies nationwide. In order to take advantage of this drug discount card program, you must create and print a card from www.drugcardamerica.com. The card can be used to save on your own prescriptions or on the prescriptions of your spouse, dependent children, or any other permanent resident in your household. The website offers an online pharmacy lookup to help you find participating pharmacies near you.

To find out more about this drug discount card program, you can:

- Visit the website at <http://www.drugcardamerica.com>, or
- Call 1-888-299-5383

Nebraska Rx Drug Card

This program, which offers free drug cards to all Nebraska residents, provides savings of up to 75% on prescription drugs at over 50,000 pharmacy locations nationwide. This program has no restrictions to membership, no income requirements, and no age limitations. You can download and print off a card from the website at www.nebraskarxcard.com. If you are unable to access the website to obtain a drug card, you can visit any Hy-Vee pharmacy location and ask the pharmacist to process your prescriptions through the Nebraska Rx Card.

To find out more about the Nebraska Rx Drug Card, you can:

- Visit the website at <http://www.nebraskarxcard.com>, or
- Call the sponsor of this program, United Networks of America, at 1-800-726-4232.

Rx Drug Card

For a monthly, quarterly, or annual membership fee, this program offers up to 80% of savings on prescription drugs at over 60,000 participating pharmacies. This program offers a 100% refund on the membership fees paid if you are not completely satisfied after the first thirty days of your membership in the program. You can register for this program through a secured website, by printing off and faxing the application, or by printing off and mailing in the application. Since this program requires payment of a registration fee, it is advisable to first look up medications and participating pharmacies to ensure that registration in the program is in your best interest. The Rx Drug Card website has an online directory for medications and pharmacies and you can also call 1-888-216-2461 to get a telephonic listing of this information.

To find out more about this program, you can:

- Visit the website at <http://www.rxdrugcard.com>, or
- Call 1-888-299-5383

Date

[Pharmaceutical Company Address]

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in regard to my patient, **[patient's name]**, who recently applied for [list medication] medication from your company's medication assistance program. While [patient's name] income places her just above your eligibility level, I would strongly encourage you to reconsider your decision based on [his or her] extenuating circumstances.

Insert compelling information about your patient here. Try to limit information to one or two paragraphs. Focus on the most compelling aspect of the patient's story and make sure you are very clear about how much money this patient receives every month and what expense he or she has. Be sure to include monthly medical treatment or equipment costs and any other specific expenses that might not be evident from the PAP application form. You may also want to include a sentence or two about how the particular medication prescribed is expected to improve the patient's health outcomes.

Thank you for reconsidering **[patient's name]** application as well as your generous donation of medication to our other patients. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to call. I can be reached at: **[insert phone number]**.

Sincerely,

[Doctor's name], MD

[Doctor's title]