



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Oxiris Barbot

Acting Commissioner

CY 2017: BigAppleRx - New York City's official Prescription Discount Card program

BigAppleRx Background

Established by City Council legislation, the BigAppleRx card is a free Pharmacy Discount Card available to everyone living, working or visiting the City, regardless of age, income, citizenship, or health insurance status. Since its debut in May 2011, BigAppleRx has saved New Yorkers over \$45 million as compared to retail prices of medications purchased, a reported overall savings of 41 percent, based on data reported by the Pharmacy Benefit Manager for the BigAppleRx program. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is responsible for managing this program and monitoring all affiliated vendors.

The BigAppleRx card ("the Card") provides discounts for a broad range of medications with the BigApple Rx vendor reporting savings over retail prices averaging 40%; 18% for brand-name medications and 54% for generic medications, including over-the-counter medications such as smoking cessation aids and diabetic supplies. No personal information or enrollment is required to use the Card. The Card is accepted at more than 2,000 NYC pharmacies, including all the major chains CVS, Rite Aid, Target and Walgreens/Duane Reade. The Card can also be used outside of NYC at nearly 60,000 pharmacies nationwide. The Card is available at www.BigAppleRx.com along with drug prices and participating pharmacies. The program has a customer services helpline that can be accessed by calling 311.

BigAppleRx Vendors

In 2011, through a competitive bidding process, DOHMH selected HealthTrans Access as the Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) to administer the BigAppleRx program. In 2014, HealthTrans was acquired by Catamaran Discount Services, LLC, which was then merged with OptumRx Services during this reporting year (2015-2016). In 2017, DOHMH amended and extended the contract agreement through August 2018. DOHMH actively working on extending the contract through early 2020, to allow adequate time for the development and the release of RFP, the assessment of vendor bids, and strengthened safeguard measures and controls against opioid abuse for existing and new program agreements, and increased pricing oversight, transparency and guarantees of competitive discount. Subsequent RFPs will seek improvements to the program and services.

Originally a standalone program, the BigAppleRx card was added in the City's IDNYC program in January 2015 (operated by NYC Human Resources Administration). Concurrently with the BigAppleRx card's connection to the City's IDNYC program, the IDNYC card was also part of the ActionHealthNYC program. Program participants used IDNYC cards which served as their membership cards and had access to prescription drug discounts through BigAppleRx as part of this card.

Advertising/Marketing

The PBM continued its advertising and outreach efforts to promote to increase utilization of BigAppleRx, including inserts in a local newspaper (NY Post).

Since the introduction of BigAppleRx in 2011, the Affordable Care Act expanded eligibility for Medicaid and created a marketplace where people can shop for low or no-cost health insurance. As a result, many more New Yorkers have health insurance coverage, which often comes with prescription drug benefits. For this reason, usage of the BigAppleRx card has declined in recent years. However, DOHMH continues



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to work with the PBM to increase awareness of the BigAppleRx card for those who remain uninsured or without prescription drug coverage.

Usage Statistics

The classes of the top drugs filled through BigAppleRx continue to be vitamins, anxiolytics/sedatives, antibiotics, anti-hypertensives and opiates.

From May 2011 (program start) through December 31, 2017:

Estimated Total Savings by BigAppleRx Cardholders	\$45,678,829
Total Claims Filled	1,609,204
Claims Filled using BigAppleRx	1,347,208
Overall Savings compared to Retail Price	40%
Average Savings on Generic Prescriptions	54 %
Average Savings on Name Brand Prescriptions	18 %

NYC DOHMH does not have independent access to the data for analysis. The stated savings of \$45 million is in comparison to retail prices as reported by the PBM.

Claim Date Year	Unique Users	Total Claims	Claims using BigAppleRx	Usual & Customary Rx's	Usual & Customary Amount	Total User Paid Amount	Estimated Savings	User Saving %
2011 (May-Dec)	34,103	82,224	74,327	7,897	\$6,872,471	\$3,707,428	\$3,165,043	46%
2012	73,285	231,795	202,280	29,515	\$16,642,470	\$8,805,585	\$7,828,658	47%
2013	66,070	314,663	267,241	47,422	\$21,260,734	\$11,777,813	\$9,469,422	45%
2014	59,598	300,919	253,942	46,977	\$20,528,802	\$12,883,393	\$7,644,898	37%
2015	44,205	264,030	215,094	48,936	\$18,506,823	\$11,087,914	\$6,920,567	37%
2016	33,461	222,454	178,772	43,682	\$16,509,583	\$10,874,083	\$5,614,732	34%
2017	30,967	193,119	155,552	37,594	\$13,376,137	\$8,316,131	\$5,035,510	38%
Grand Total	341,689	1,609,204	1,347,208	262,023	\$113,697,020	\$67,452,347	\$45,678,830	40%

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