



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH

Commissioner

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December 19, 2017

The Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker, New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear Speaker Mark-Viverito,

In accordance with the New York City Administrative Code §17-1001 (as amended by Local Law No. 19 of 2005), enclosed please find a copy of the 2016 Prescription Drug Discount Card Act. A report summarizing the Prescription Drug Discount Card Program, known as BigAppleRx, covering the period January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016 is attached.

Please do not hesitate to contact Sam Miller, Associate Commissioner for External Affairs at (347) 396-4078 or smiller15@health.nyc.gov, if the Department can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary T. Bassett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Bassett" clearly legible.

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
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CY 2016: 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, the BigAppleRx vendor reports that it has saved New Yorkers over \$40 million (as of December 31, 2016) as compared to retail prices of medications purchased. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) is responsible for managing this program and monitoring all affiliated vendors. DOHMH does not have independent access to the data for analysis.

The BigAppleRx card ("the Card") provides discounts for a broad range of medications. The BigAppleRx vendor reports savings averaging 41%; 18% for brand-name medications and 53% 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 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 is preparing a new RFP for selection of Pharmacy Benefit Manager vendor to develop, operate and administer the BigAppleRx program and minimize any interruption of services.

Originally a standalone program, the BigAppleRx card has since been embedded in the City's IDNYC program in (operated by NYC Human Resources Administration, or HRA) beginning in January 2015. Concurrently with the BigAppleRx card's connection to the City's IDNYC program, in the summer of 2016, the card was also an intrinsic part of the ActionHealthNYC program. ActionHealthNYC was a mayoral demonstration program led by DOHMH in partnership with the City's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), HRA, NYC Health + Hospitals, and others that linked uninsured low-income immigrant New Yorkers with better access to more coordinated health care services. ActionHealthNYC 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 direct mail, and inserts in community and ethnic newspapers.

Since the introduction of Big Apple Rx 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 to work with the PBM to increase awareness of the BigAppleRx card as an option for savings for those who remain uninsured or without prescription drug coverage.

Usage Statistics

Top drugs filled through BigAppleRx continue to be vitamins followed by anxiolytics/sedatives, antibiotics, anti-hypertensives and opiates.

From May 2011 (program start) through December 31, 2016:

Estimated Total Savings by Big Apple Rx Cardholders*	\$40,643,319
Total Claims Filled	1,416,085
Claims Filled using BigAppleRx	1,191,565
Overall Savings compared to Retail Price	41 %
Average Savings on Generic Prescriptions	53 %
Average Savings on Name Brand Prescriptions	18 %

Claim Date Year	Unique Users	Total Claims	Claims using BigAppleRx	Usual & Customary Rxs	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%
Grand Total	310,722	1,416,085	1,191,656	224,429	\$100,320,883	\$59,136,215	\$40,643,319	41%

* NYC DOHMH does not have independent access to the data for analysis. The stated savings is in comparison to retail prices.

