



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

CY 2018: 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 \$49 million as compared to retail prices of medications purchased, a reported overall savings of 40 percent, based on data reported by the Pharmacy Benefit Manager (PBM) 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 percent; 18 percent for brand-name medications and 52 percent 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 such as 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.

Originally a standalone program, the BigAppleRx card was added to the City's IDNYC program in January 2015 (operated by NYC Human Resources Administration). Currently, over one million IDNYC cards have been issued by the City with the BigAppleRx program benefit embedded on the card.

Advertising/Marketing

The PBM continued its advertising and outreach efforts to promote increased utilization of BigAppleRx, including ongoing support of IDNYC usage, and weekly fulfillment of English and Spanish card requests.

Since the introduction of BigAppleRx in 2011, the Affordable Care Act also expanded eligibility for Medicaid and created the New York State of Health marketplace in 2013 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 for those who remain uninsured, underinsured or without prescription drug coverage.

Usage Statistics

The top drugs filled through BigAppleRx continue to be vitamins, anxiolytics/sedatives, antibiotics, anti-hypertensives and iron supplements. In 2018, the program limited opioids in BigAppleRx's formulary of discount drugs (with the exception of opioid medications used to treat opioid use disorder, such as buprenorphine) and opiates are no longer one of the top drugs filled through BigAppleRx.



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From May 2011 (program start) through December 31, 2018:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Estimated Total Savings by BigAppleRx Cardholders | \$49,575,575 |
| Total Claims Filled | 1,765,906 |
| Claims Filled using BigAppleRx | 1,472,879 |
| Overall Savings compared to Retail Price | 40% |
| Average Savings on Generic Prescriptions | 52 % |
| Average Savings on Name Brand Prescriptions | 18 % |

NYC DOHMH does not have independent access to the data for analysis. The stated savings of \$50 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 | \$7,836,885 | 47% |
| 2013 | 66,070 | 314,663 | 267,241 | 47,422 | \$21,260,734 | \$11,777,813 | \$9,482,921 | 45% |
| 2014 | 59,598 | 300,919 | 253,942 | 46,977 | \$20,528,802 | \$12,883,393 | \$7,645,409 | 37% |
| 2015 | 44,205 | 264,030 | 215,094 | 48,936 | \$18,506,823 | \$11,087,914 | \$7,418,909 | 37% |
| 2016 | 33,461 | 222,454 | 178,772 | 43,682 | \$16,509,583 | \$10,874,083 | \$5,635,500 | 34% |
| 2017 | 30,967 | 193,119 | 155,552 | 37,594 | \$13,376,137 | \$8,316,131 | \$5,060,006 | 38% |
| 2018 | 24,213 | 156,702 | 125,671 | 31,032 | \$10,439,529 | \$6,542,174 | \$3,897,355 | 37% |
| Grand Total | 365,902 | 1,765,906 | 1,472,879 | 293,055 | \$124,136,549 | \$73,994,521 | \$50,142,028 | 40% |