



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

Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
*Commissioner*

***CY 2019: 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 \$54 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 BigAppleRx vendor reporting savings over retail prices averaging 40 percent; 18 percent for brand-name medications and 53 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 [BigAppleRx.com](http://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.



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*From May 2011 (program start) through December 31, 2019:*

Estimated Total Savings by BigAppleRx Cardholders	\$54,005,387
Total Claims Filled	1,883,289
Claims Filled using BigAppleRx	1,594,808
Overall Savings compared to Retail Price	40%
Average Savings on Generic Prescriptions	53%
Average Savings on Name Brand Prescriptions	18%

*NYC DOHMH does not have independent access to the data for analysis. The stated savings of \$54 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 Savings %
<b>2011 (May-Dec)</b>	34,103	82,224	74,327	7,897	\$ 6,872,471	\$ 3,707,428	\$ 3,165,043	46%
<b>2012</b>	78,744	228,647	200,758	27,889	\$ 17,136,161	\$ 8,998,747	\$ 8,137,413	47%
<b>2013</b>	72,607	313,892	269,136	44,756	\$ 21,377,480	\$ 11,829,987	\$ 9,547,493	45%
<b>2014</b>	64,404	302,341	258,146	44,195	\$ 20,619,856	\$ 12,941,478	\$ 7,678,379	37%
<b>2015</b>	48,358	264,901	218,760	46,141	\$ 18,585,310	\$ 11,571,285	\$ 7,014,025	38%
<b>2016</b>	37,135	225,077	183,629	41,448	\$ 16,716,484	\$ 11,013,297	\$ 5,703,187	34%
<b>2017</b>	34,279	193,146	157,738	35,408	\$ 13,376,135	\$ 8,334,624	\$ 5,041,511	38%
<b>2018</b>	27,352	156,974	126,270	30,704	\$ 10,463,086	\$ 6,556,698	\$ 3,906,387	37%
<b>2019</b>	23,090	116,087	106,044	10,043	\$ 9,750,449	\$ 5,938,499	\$ 3,811,949	39%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>420,072</b>	<b>1,883,289</b>	<b>1,594,808</b>	<b>288,481</b>	<b>134,897,432</b>	<b>80,892,043</b>	<b>54,005,387</b>	<b>40%</b>