**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD
Commissioner

CY 2020: 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 $57 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 and nearly all independent pharmacies. 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.

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.

Outreach
The PBM continued its outreach efforts to promote increased utilization of BigAppleRx, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including ongoing support of IDNYC usage, and 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 10 drugs filled through BigAppleRx as of the end of December 2020 are:

	Drug Label Name	Therapeutic Class
1.	Vitamin D CAP 50000UNT	Vitamin D
2.	Folic Acid TAB 1MG	Vitamin B complex
3.	Aspirin TAB 81MG EC	Salicylates
4.	Zolpidem TAB 10MG	Anxiolytics, Sedatives, and Hypnoti
5.	Amoxicillin CAP 500MG	Aminopenicillins
6.	Amlodipine TAB 5MG	Dihydropyridines
7.	Amlodipine TAB 10MG	Dihydropyridines
8.	Hydrochlorot TAB 25MG	Thiazide Diuretics
9.	Ferrous Sulf TAB 325MG	Iron preparations
10.	Azithromycin TAB 250MG	Other Macrolides

From May 2011 (program start) through December 31, 2020:

Estimated Total Savings by BigAppleRx Cardholders	$57,148,030.70
Total Claims Filled	1,973,922
Claims Filled using BigAppleRx	1,676,819
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 $57 million is in comparison to retail prices as reported by the PBM.

Claim Date Year	Unique Users	Total Claims	Claims using BigAppleRx	Usual & Customary Rxs	Usual & Customary Amount	Total User Paid Amount	Estimated Savings	User Savings %
2011 (May-Dec)	34,103	82,224	74,327	7,897	$ 6,872,471	$ 3,707,428	$ 3,165,043	46%
2012	78,744	228,647	200,758	27,889	$ 17,136,161	$ 8,998,747	$ 8,137,413	47%
2013	72,607	313,892	269,136	44,756	$ 21,377,480	$ 11,829,987	$ 9,547,493	45%
2014	64,404	302,341	258,146	44,195	$ 20,619,856	$ 12,941,478	$ 7,678,379	37%
2015	48,358	264,901	218,760	46,141	$ 18,585,310	$ 11,571,285	$ 7,014,025	38%
2016	37,135	225,077	183,629	41,448	$ 16,716,484	$ 11,013,297	$ 5,703,187	34%
2017	34,279	193,146	157,738	35,408	$ 13,376,135	$ 8,334,624	$ 5,041,511	38%
2018	27,352	156,974	126,270	30,704	$ 10,463,086	$ 6,556,698	$ 3,906,387	37%
2019	23,090	116,087	106,044	10,043	$ 9,750,449	$ 5,938,499	$ 3,811,949	39%
2020	15,631	90,633	82,011	8,622	$ 6,350,154	$ 3,207,509	$ 3,142,644	49%
Grand Total	**435,703**	**1,973,922**	**1,676,819**	**297,103**	**$ 141,247,585.51**	**$ 84,099,552.81**	**$ 57,148,030.70**	**40%**