

Urgent Rx

A collaboration of the Health Planning Council of the Human Services Coalition, Cayuga Medical Center, Kinney Drugs and United Way of Tompkins County

Pilot Program Report

May 2008

Prepared by Lisa Horn, Consultant

Edited by Meg Cole and Samantha Smith, United Way of Tompkins County



United Way of Tompkins County

Table of Contents

Purpose	2
Overview	2
Need for Prescription Assistance	2
Urgent Rx Pilot Program	
Components	3
Process.....	8
Program Results & Improvements	9
Publicity	10
Conclusion.....	11
<u>Appendix A: Figures</u>	12
1. Drug Formulary	12
2. Authorization Form/Voucher and Information Sheet.....	13
3. Follow-up Telephone Survey	16
4. Database Screen Shots	18
5. Year One Report.....	22
6. Additional Site Selection Process	24
7. Request for Proposals – Additional Site	26
8. New Flow of Operations.....	28
9. United Way of Tompkins County Brochure.....	29
10. Cayuga Medical Center 2006 Annual Report Excerpt.....	31
11. Cayuga Medical Center Health Visions Magazine, Summer 2007	32
12. United Way of Tompkins County Guest Column	33
13. United Way of Tompkins County Press Release.....	34
<u>Appendix B: Other Prescription Assistance Program Options and Figures</u>	35
14. Free Community Pool of Selected Prescriptions – Issues/Models	36
15. Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs	44
16. Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs (Web version).....	53
17. Tompkins Rx Discount Program	54

Special thanks to the Brooks Family Foundation for providing the financial resources to develop the documentation of the Urgent Rx Program and initial medication funding.

Purpose

This documentation is intended to serve as a guide for other communities to develop their own prescription assistance programs. Communities can utilize this information to create a variety of low-cost methodologies to provide a significant benefit to their residents.

Overview

Prescription medications have increasingly become a critical

component in the practice of medical care. Presently when uninsured people discover that their prescribed drug is unaffordable, they often do not fill the prescription at all. An estimated 10-25% of people in Tompkins County are uninsured or underinsured. In an effort to meet this need, the Health Planning Council (HPC) of the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, Inc. (HSC), an United Way of Tompkins County (UWTC) partner organization, took the lead to create the Urgent Rx Pilot Program. Urgent Rx was designed to serve two purposes:

“This program saved me from being admitted to the hospital with pneumonia, because without it, I could not have afforded my prescriptions.”

- Urgent Rx Program Recipient

- 1) To provide prescriptions to uninsured individuals to help resolve their immediate, urgent health issue and also to prevent potentially more serious medical needs in the future which may occur as a result of not taking prescribed medicines.
- 2) To provide information about other prescription and health insurance programs available to the uninsured.

Need for Prescription Assistance

The need for prescription assistance in Tompkins County has become increasingly evident, particularly for uninsured, underinsured, and low-income residents. In 2003, the COMPASS II needs and asset assessment identified Affordable Health Care as one of the top five priority issues needing to be addressed in Tompkins County. In a survey of 500 randomly selected households, 20% of respondents indicated not having enough money to pay the doctor or buy prescriptions. This critical problem was most evident for those with the lowest incomes; 45% of the respondents, with household incomes below \$15,000, said it was a problem. County-wide, the percent of uninsured residents is estimated to be

around 10%, but insurance coverage is significantly different based on income. In the COMPASS II survey, nearly 46% of households with incomes below \$15,000 indicated that they did not have health insurance.

Several programs have been created to help uninsured and underinsured residents, including state programs like Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus as well as many pharmaceutical company assistance programs. Unfortunately, many of these programs do not cover all who need assistance. The state programs have low income thresholds for eligibility and other programs may be too expensive for the working poor to afford. Many of the pharmaceutical company assistance programs can take up to 4-6 weeks to access, and uninsured individuals receiving emergency care frequently do not have the funds to pay for prescribed medicines. The lack of community resources for the prescription needs of uninsured residents frequently leads to the inability of individuals to receive prescriptions. This seriously hinders the therapeutic process which in turn can lead to loss of work time, repeat visits to the emergency room, and long-term negative health effects.

Urgent Rx Pilot Program

The Urgent Rx Pilot Program emerged following the successful implementation of other healthcare-related initiatives in Tompkins County (please see Appendix B, p. 35). HPC developed the idea and criteria for a free community pool of generic medications in 2002, but had no feasible way of implementing the program. In 2005 the Brooks Family Foundation, a key United Way of Tompkins County (UWTC) donor, responded to the COMPASS II findings by seeking to support and assist in the development of a program which would improve the health care status of residents in Tompkins County. The Brooks Family Foundation was also interested in seeing a program mode that could be replicated in other communities. UWTC contacted several knowledgeable leaders in the community to explore various proposals. Through this collaboration, Urgent Rx was created.

In the development phase, several different models were researched and analyzed. A number of areas for decision-making were critical in the development of the project:

- 1) What are our basic criteria?***
- 2) Who are our partners?***
- 3) Which drugs should be covered?***
- 4) Who is eligible for the program?***
- 5) How can we pay for the program?***
- 6) How do we manage the program?***
- 7) What are the best ways to provide information about additional possible sources of assistance?***

1. What are our basic criteria?

Early in the process, HPC determined that the basic criteria for the small pilot program would be to:

- focus on urgent care needs (due to the availability of resources for chronic medicine, the unplanned nature of urgent care needs, and the high costs for uninsured patients)
- have a formulary of medicine developed with local physician and pharmacist expertise
- utilize a limited set of providers (both medical providers and pharmacies)
- have a simple administrative component
- connect patients with possible insurance options through a follow-up telephone call and mailings

2. Who are our partners?

Health Planning Council – Lead Agency/Program Administrator

One of the three programs of the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, Inc., HPC's mission is to strengthen services and networks to improve the health of county residents. HPC has provided health related education, research, technical assistance, and new initiatives to Tompkins County for many years and is considered a key resource for health related issues.

Cayuga Medical Center - Voucher Distribution Sites

The local hospital, Cayuga Medical Center at Ithaca (CMC), participated with the HPC in the design of the Urgent Rx Pilot Program. The CMC Emergency Room and satellite East Campus were identified as the initial distribution sites for the Urgent Rx Pilot Program vouchers. Approximately 4,000 uninsured patients are served by CMC per year with more than half typically receiving prescriptions. This offered the opportunity to begin the program with one provider. Cayuga Medical Center has been providing health care to the citizens of Ithaca and the greater Finger Lakes region for more than 100 years and has a long history of community involvement and support.

“I was surprised and pleased by this program. I would not have been able to fill the prescription for my antibiotic without it.”

-Urgent Rx Program Recipient

Kinney Drugs - Pharmacy

Kinney Drugs was selected to be the initial participating pharmacy and was involved with the development of the project from its earliest beginnings as the privately owned Hill Drugs. At the time of pharmacy selection, Kinney Drugs had four stores in Tompkins County. The locations were in Downtown Ithaca, Collegetown, Trumansburg, and Dryden. Tompkins County has an urban center in Ithaca, but is predominantly a rural population. This range of locations within one larger organization allowed Urgent Rx to be accessible to more users while reducing administrative efforts. During the first year of operation, Kinney Drugs closed the Collegetown location for reasons unrelated to Urgent Rx.

United Way of Tompkins County

In 2003, the United Way of Tompkins County (UWTC) sponsored COMPASS II, a comprehensive needs and asset assessment of the county. Five priority areas were identified including: Poverty, Lack of Affordable Child Care, Lack of Affordable Housing, Unemployment/Underemployment, and Lack of Affordable Health Care. In response to the results of COMPASS II, the Brooks Family Foundation awarded a \$25,000 challenge grant to UWTC to address health care issues in the county. Through its annual campaign, UWTC raised funds to match the Brooks Family Foundation grant and committed those funds to pay for medications in the Urgent Rx Program.

3. Which drugs should be covered?

Formulary development/rationale

Several criteria were examined in determining which drugs to cover in the Urgent Rx Program.

- Generic medicines only
- Urgent need
- Limited to 14 day supply (to discourage use of program for chronic needs)
- Child and adult needs
- Most common in general use
- Most common in ER
- What will help prevent need to return to the ER
- What contributes most to public health
- What has a high cost to patients

The Cayuga Medical Center pharmacists worked with Kinney Drugs pharmacists and Emergency Room physicians to develop the formulary for Urgent Rx. The formulary was based on Tier One of the Blue Cross Blue Shield three-tiered drug formulary. This tier included generic drugs which constitutes all of the Urgent Rx formulary. The formulary was limited to drugs for urgent conditions as opposed to chronic conditions and included antibiotics, pain killers/NSAIDS, anti-nauseates, and anti-pyretics. All drugs paid for through Urgent Rx must be on the formulary list (Figure 1. Drug Formulary, p. 12).

4. Who is eligible for the program?

Eligibility to participate in the Urgent Rx Program is based solely upon a patient's insurance status. A patient who receives care at one of the participating medical providers who does not have health insurance and is being prescribed a drug on the formulary is considered eligible for an Urgent Rx voucher. The program is **not** means tested – meaning participants are not screened for an income limit.

The time and effort required to verify income would limit the program's ability to immediately provide medicines and would add significantly to program staff time. Including patients without health insurance, as opposed to those without prescription insurance, helps those most in need. It also allows HPC to identify households that may be eligible for health subsidy programs such as Medicaid, Family Health Plus or Child Health Plus. The Urgent Rx Program provides a critical contact with a population that may be more effectively served. There is currently no limit on the number of times a patient may use Urgent Rx. Again, the time and effort to ascertain usage would inhibit the program's ability to provide immediate access to needed medicines. While Urgent Rx is open to all ages, it is not intended to be a supplement or alternative to Medicare Part D. Additionally, Urgent Rx is not restricted to county residents. A significant number of workers who reside in contiguous counties work and receive services in Tompkins County.

“I really appreciated it! It was such a relief to know I wouldn't have to worry about the cost of my prescriptions, on top of everything else.”

-Urgent Rx Program Recipient

5. How can we pay for the program?

The \$25,000 challenge grant from the Brooks Family Foundation, and the matching funds raised by UWTC, pay for the prescription costs of the Urgent Rx Program. In addition, HPC received \$10,000 from the Park Foundation to help with development and the initial piloting of the program. The Tompkins Health Network continues to support the follow-up outreach and data collection. The essential support from the Health Network is approximately \$30,000/year. HPC also negotiated discounts from Kinney Drugs to lower the cost of medication from retail prices.

6. How do we manage the program?

A key component of the Urgent Rx Pilot Program was the consistent, supportive feedback from knowledgeable, invested community members as well as the experience and competence of the HPC staff. Significant work and feedback was provided by Cayuga Medical Center's and Kinney Drug's staff and administration, and HPC's Board of Directors and Committee Members. The knowledge and expertise provided was invaluable in creating a fiscally responsible and administratively sound program that offers the best results for patients.

Administrative Structure/Key Responsibilities of Partners

As lead agency for Urgent Rx, the Health Planning Council is responsible for:

- Overall administration
- Patient eligibility guidelines
- Determination of the formulary of prescription drugs with recommendations from our partners
- Establishment of a voucher (Figure 2. Authorization Form/Voucher & Information Sheet, p. 13) and referral process whereby eligible patients can present the completed voucher, and fill formulary prescriptions, at no cost to themselves at designated pharmacies
- Payment for pharmaceuticals dispensed under Urgent Rx
- Follow-up and outreach with Urgent Rx participants
- Data tracking and reporting
- Urgent Rx effectiveness evaluation

Kinney Drugs is responsible for:

- Dispensing pharmaceuticals to patients who present a completed Urgent Rx voucher at no charge to the patient
- Ensuring that prescriptions are a) on the formulary; or b) presented within 5 days after the voucher date
- Ensuring that prescriptions are filled for a maximum of a 14 day supply
- Obtaining authorization and contact information from patients, under HIPPA regulations, and sending authorized information to HSC
- Invoicing HSC for pharmaceuticals dispensed according to Urgent Rx guidelines at least once every 30 days

Cayuga Medical Center is responsible for:

- Screening potential patients for eligibility
- Providing eligible patients with voucher for Urgent Rx and information sheet about program usage
- Maintaining control of vouchers

United Way of Tompkins County is responsible for:

- Securing funding and administration of dollars raised for prescription assistance
- Review of vouchers submitted to HPC and release of program funding
- Marketing and communication for the program
- In conjunction with the CMC and HPC, United Way of Tompkins County Board of Directors oversees fiduciary and strategic direction

7. What are the best ways to provide information about additional possible sources of assistance?

Survey & Outreach

A key component of the Urgent Rx Program is the follow-up contact with patients. Every patient is contacted by telephone and asked to complete a short survey. This survey allows HPC to:

- Evaluate patient satisfaction with Urgent Rx
- Gather information about patient needs for health insurance and prescription medications
- Provide information to eligible patients about County and New York State health insurance and prescription medication programs (e.g. Medicaid, Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus)

Each patient, including those HPC is unable to contact by telephone, is mailed a packet of information about various health insurance and prescription benefits programs within the County and the State. In addition to the follow-up survey, HPC is in the process of exploring a 6-month, follow-up survey to determine the effectiveness of the outreach component of the program. All survey data is gathered and stored in a relational database. (Figure 3. Follow-up Telephone Survey, p. 16 & Figure 5. Year One Report, p. 22)

Program Process

When uninsured patients are identified at participating medical providers as being eligible for Urgent Rx, they are given an information sheet about the program and a voucher form. The patient is then able to bring the voucher with their prescription (within 5 days of receipt of voucher) to a participating pharmacy to receive their medications at no cost.

Authorization/Voucher Form

Urgent Rx incorporated a Patient Authorization form into the voucher process to make clear that HPC would receive billing information and pay the pharmacy for the medicine dispensed to Urgent Rx patients. It also allows a HPC representative to call the patient for follow-up outreach. To provide better administrative tracking, HPC assigns serial numbers and color-coded vouchers for each distribution site. Patients also receive an information sheet on how to use the Urgent Rx voucher form (Figure 2. Authorization Form / Voucher & Information Sheet, p. 13).

Database

A relational database has been developed to track the progress of the Urgent Rx Program. In addition to client, visit, and prescription information, the database contains the survey data, mail tracking and billing information on each patient visit. The database allows for on-going analysis of the cost and utilization of the Urgent Rx Program as well as the ability to assemble information on the uninsured population of the county (Figure 4. Database Screen Shots, p. 18).

Program Results

Urgent Rx has been very successful thus far. In the first year of operations, a total of 1,267 prescriptions were provided to 641 individuals without health insurance at any cost to the patient (Figure 5. Year One Report, p. 22). Over half of the prescriptions cost \$10 or less with an average prescription cost of \$16.70. Patients overwhelmingly found that the program was easy to use and anecdotes indicate the availability of the program was beneficial. While the average dollar value per patient is relatively low, any unexpected cost can be difficult for a low-income household to manage. Frequently people do not know what the cost of their medicine will be until they go to the pharmacy; the Urgent Rx Program gives people the security of knowing their prescription will get filled and they won't be turned away or embarrassed.

Program Improvements

During the first year of the pilot program, various improvements have been explored.

Additional site

With the first successful year of operations, and UWTC's commitment to provide funds to pay for prescriptions, HPC began the process of deciding whether to include an additional site for voucher distribution. A review process was developed to determine whether and how to expand (Figure 6. Additional Site Selection Process, p. 24). The review process resulted in a decision to move forward with adding an additional site(s) to the Urgent Rx Program. Several agencies were identified as passing the threshold criteria for being considered: a) places where uninsured people receive urgent medical care and b) not-for-profit agencies/clinics. These agencies were solicited to provide an application in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) (Figure 7. Request for Proposals – Additional Site, p. 26). The selection process has been completed and two new medical providers – the Ithaca Free Clinic and the Cayuga Medical Center Inpatient Program – will be providing Urgent Rx vouchers to uninsured patients.

Authorization/Voucher change

The process for distributing the voucher and authorization was changed after the first year to better facilitate the receipt of complete information and reduce the burden on HPC's medical provider partners. Originally, the voucher and authorization were separate forms that were completed at the point of care, the Emergency Room or Convenient Care Center (Figure 8. New Flow of Operations, p. 28). Due to time constraints and the busy nature of the point of care, HPC created a single form wherein the authorization and contact information is completed at the pharmacy. This change in process has eliminated missing information and reduced errors. It has also eliminated the possibility of tracking individuals who receive, but choose not to use the Urgent Rx voucher. In addition, HSC logo stickers are placed on each voucher to indicate it is an original. This additional step was included to discourage the illegitimate copying or producing of vouchers.

Database change

After the first year of operation, the tracking and survey database was overhauled extensively to provide better reporting and cleaner tracking methodologies. The improved database will also streamline the process for receiving electronic billing information from Kinney Drugs and reduce data entry time and errors.

Prescription Benefits Manager

HPC has explored the option of adding a Prescription Benefits Manager (PBM) to the Urgent Rx Program. PBM's work with pharmacies and health plans to manage billing and coverage authorization as well as provide cost discounts and reporting (e.g. drug utilization, cost savings). The benefit of the PBM for the Urgent Rx Program could be to potentially reduce billing and reporting time as well as increase reporting flexibility. However, at this time, HPC has not found a PBM process that will effectively support Urgent Rx and will continue tracking billing information internally.

Formulary expansion

The formulary has expanded slightly for two primary reasons: 1) some brand drugs have become generic and 2) some generic medicines have become more commonly prescribed. Formulary evaluation is an on-going process.

On-Site Outreach

During the second year of the Urgent Rx Program, HPC developed a brochure with tips about finding lower cost prescriptions. This included information regarding health insurance subsidy programs such as Child Health Plus, and it was mailed with the outreach follow-up packet. In addition, the HPC decided to include this information for distribution directly with the voucher, which highlights the subsidy's importance, and could be read while clients wait for their prescription to be filled.

Publicity

While the Urgent Rx Program is not advertised to clients, publicity about the program has been invaluable in raising funds to continue the program. Cayuga Medical Center has included articles about Urgent Rx in their annual report and in their periodic magazine (Figure 9. United Way of Tompkins County Brochure, p. 29/ Figure 10. Cayuga Medical Center Annual Report Excerpt, p. 31/ Figure 11. Cayuga Medical Center Health Visions Magazine, summer 2007, p. 32). In addition, United Way of Tompkins County has created a brochure describing the program, and has provided guest columns and press releases in the local newspaper (Figure 12. UWTC Guest Column, p. 33 & Figure 13. UWTC Press Release, p. 34).

Conclusion

New York estimations indicate many people who are eligible for subsidy programs (e.g. Medicaid, Child Health Plus, and Family Health Plus) are not enrolled. Community advocates often work to publicize these programs and encourage people to sign up.

“This is a great program, because I think that there are lots of people in this situation where they are not able to fill the prescriptions they’re written. Thank you so much.”

- Urgent Rx Program Recipient

Initial program evaluation has shown many people are not eligible for any subsidy programs. For example in 2007, a person working full-time at a minimum wage job would earn about \$14,972/year. Yet, the cut-off limit for Family Health Plus is \$10,210/year. It is necessary to lessen the gap of those eligible for subsidiary programs and those who are able to afford health insurance.

A strength of Urgent Rx is its identification of people in our community who are uninsured and the capacity to provide information making sure clients know about subsidy programs. This is a very cost-effective way to target outreach directly and has resulted in many people becoming enrolled in subsidy programs. In six-month follow-up phone calls with a sample of Urgent Rx Program participants, the HPC found that 26% of those reached had become insured (80% of those in subsidy programs, 20% through an employer plan).

The Urgent Rx Pilot Program is proven to be a successful model with supportive outreach providing opportunities to individuals to meet their prescription needs.

Appendix A: Figures

Figure 1. Drug Formulary (7/5/07)

Urgent Rx List of Approved Medicines (GENERIC ONLY):

Antibiotics (oral): amoxicillin, amoxicillin/clavulonate, ampicillin, azithromycin, dicloxacillin, cefaclor, cefadroxil, cefuroxime, cephalexin, ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, erythromycins, penicillins, sulfa/trimeth, metronidazole

Antiemetics (oral): meclizine, prochlorperazine, promethazine

Antiemetics (rectal): meclizine, prochlorperazine

Antifungals (oral): fluconazole, griseofulvin, nystatin

Antihistamines (oral): diphenhydramine, hydroxyzine

Antispasmodic (oral): bethanecol, clidinium products, dicyclomine, hyoscyamine products

Antitussives/Expectorants (oral): guaifenesin/codeine, hydrocodone/homatropine, promethazine/codeine, benzonatate, guaifenesin products

Antiviral (oral): acyclovir, amantadine

Asthma (inhaled): albuterol

Muscle Relaxant (oral): baclofen, methocarbamol, carisoprodal, cyclobenzaprine

Narcotic Pain Relievers (oral): acetaminophen/codeine, acetaminophen/propoxyphene, acetaminophen/hydrocodone, morphine, oxycodone

NSAIDs (oral): diclofenac, ibuprofen, fenoprofen, flurbiprofen, indomethacin, ketoprofen, nabumetone, naproxen, naproxen sodium, piroxicam, salsalate, sulindac, tolmentin

Ophthalmic Antiinfectives/Combinations: bacitracin, bac/neo/poly, erythromycin, gentamycin, sodium sulfacetamide, TMP/poly, tobramycin, neo/poly/dex

Ophthalmic Anti-inflammatory: dexamethasone, prednisolone

Otic Anti-infective: neo/poly/HC

Steroids (oral): prednisone, dexamethasone, methylprednisolone

Topical Antibiotics: bacitracin/polymixin, mupirocin ointment, metronidazole topical and metronidazole vaginal generic (when available)

Topical Antifungals/Combinations: nystatin, triamcinolone/nystatin, betamethasone/clotrimazole

Topical Steroids: fluocinonide, hydrocortisone, triamcinolone

Ulcer/Heartburn (oral): cimetidine, famotidine, ranitidine

Urinary Tract Analgesics: phenazopyradine

Figure 2. Authorization Form/Voucher & Information Sheet

SAMPLE

XXXXX
LOCATION

URGENT Rx VOUCHER

Voucher is valid for **5** days from the date issued

PRESCRIBER:

CIRCLE # Urgent Rx prescriptions (see FORMULARY on the back): 1 2 3 4

Prescriber Signature _____ Date Rx written ____/____/____

PHARMACIST:

Patient Name (Please Print LEGIBLY): _____

Patient Date of Birth ____/____/____

Legal Guardian Name if Patient is Under 18 (Please Print): _____

Patient Mailing Address: _____ Town: _____ Zip: _____

Patient Phone#: _____ Alternate Phone # _____

Date Filled: ____/____/____

PATIENT:

PLEASE READ AND SIGN:

- 1) I certify that I have no private or government health insurance.
- 2) I understand that the Urgent Rx voucher will only pay for prescriptions included on the Urgent Rx list of approved medicines, and only if the prescriptions were given to me as part of my care for today's visit to the Cayuga Medical Center Emergency Department or Convenient Care Center in Ithaca.
- 3) I authorize release of my billing information, about medicines paid for with Urgent Rx, to the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County.
- 4) I understand that the Human Services Coalition will contact me with information about additional programs that may help with health care expenses. I also understand that the person who contacts me will have no information about my health condition, diagnosis, or prescription(s).
- 5) I agree to hold harmless the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County for my participation in Urgent Rx.

If I do not sign this authorization, I understand I will not be able to participate in Urgent Rx and have my prescription medicine paid for by Urgent Rx.

Patient Signature or Legal Guardian Signature: _____ Date ____/____/____

**Urgent Rx vouchers are accepted ONLY at the following
Kinney Drugs locations:**

513 N. Cayuga St. Ithaca, NY (Northside) Mon – Sat (9:00 – 6:00) Sun (9–1) (607) 272-8333	44 North St. Dryden, NY Mon – Fri (9:00 – 9:00) Sat (9–6), Sun (9–1) (607) 844-8273	2100 Trumansburg Road Trumansburg, NY Mon – Fri (9:00 – 8:00) Sat (9–6), Sun - closed (607) 387-6661
--	--	---

**For information or questions about Urgent Rx, call
the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County at 272-9331**

This voucher is limited to a 14-day supply. THIS VOUCHER IS NOT A PRESCRIPTION. All prescriptions must be written on approved prescription blanks pursuant to all Federal and State regulations. All prescriptions must be filled **generically**. Oral dosage forms will include all **generic** tablet, capsule, and liquid formulations commercially available. Topical dosage forms will include all **generic** creams, ointments, gels, etc. commercially available. Ophthalmic and otic dosage forms will include all **generic** solutions, suspensions, and ointments commercially available.

Urgent Rx List of Approved Medicines (GENERIC ONLY):

Antibiotics (oral): amoxicillin, amoxicillin/clavulonate, ampicillin, azithromycin, dicloxacillin, cefaclor, cefadroxil, cefuroxime, cephalixin, ciprofloxacin, doxycycline, erythromycins, penicillins, sulfa/trimeth, metronidazole

Antiemetics (oral): meclizine, prochlorperazine, promethazine

Antiemetics (rectal): meclizine, prochlorperazine

Antifungals (oral): fluconazole, griseofulvin, nystatin

Antihistamines (oral): diphenhydramine, hydroxyzine

Antispasmodic (oral): bethanecol, clidinium products, dicyclomine, hyoscyamine products

Antitussives/Expectorants (oral): guaifenesin/codeine, hydrocodone/homatropine, promethazine/codeine, benzonatate, guaifenesin products

Antiviral (oral): acyclovir, amantadine

Asthma (inhaled): albuterol

Muscle Relaxant (oral): baclofen, methocarbamol, carisoprodal, cyclobenzaprine

Narcotic Pain Relievers (oral): acetaminophen/codeine, acetaminophen/propoxyphene, acetaminophen/hydrocodone, morphine, oxycodone

NSAIDs (oral): diclofenac, ibuprofen, fenoprofen, flurbiprofen, indomethacin, ketoprofen, nabumetone, naproxen, naproxen sodium, piroxicam, salsalate, sulindac, tolmentin

Ophthalmic Antiinfectives/Combinations: bacitracin, bac/neo/poly, erythromycin, gentamycin, sodium sulfacetamide, TMP/poly, tobramycin, neo/poly/dex

Ophthalmic Anti-inflammatory: dexamethasone, prednisolone

Otic Anti-infective: neo/poly/HC

Steroids (oral): prednisone, dexamethasone, methylprednisolone

Topical Antibiotics: bacitracin/polymixin, mupirocin ointment, metronidazole topical and metronidazole vaginal generic (when available)

Topical Antifungals/Combinations: nystatin, triamcinolone/nystatin, betamethasone/clotrimazole

Topical Steroids: fluocinonide, hydrocortisone, triamcinolone

Ulcer/Heartburn (oral): cimetidine, famotidine, ranitidine

Urinary Tract Analgesics: phenazopyradine

What is Urgent Rx?

Urgent Rx helps people who have no health insurance pay for some medicines that are prescribed for them at the Cayuga Medical Center Emergency Department or Convenient Care Center in Ithaca.

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE HEALTH INSURANCE AND RECEIVE PRESCRIPTIONS TODAY, ASK YOUR NURSE OR DOCTOR ABOUT URGENT RX.

Do you qualify?

To qualify for the Urgent Rx Voucher:

- You cannot have health insurance coverage (either private or government).
- Your prescription must be from today's visit to Cayuga Medical Center's Emergency Department or Convenient Care Center in Ithaca.
- Your medicine must be on the list of approved medicines printed on the Urgent Rx Voucher.

What do you do? It's Easy!

If you qualify, you will receive the Urgent Rx Voucher that you can use to pay for the prescription at a participating Kinney Drugs store in Tompkins County.

1. Sign the Urgent Rx Program Authorization and give it back to the health care provider before you leave. Cayuga Medical Center staff will then give you the Voucher.
2. Bring the Urgent Rx Voucher and prescription(s) to one of the Kinney Drugs listed below. This must be done within five days for the Voucher to be used as payment. The Voucher will cover the full cost of the prescription(s).
3. By signing the Program Authorization, you agree that a representative from the Human Services Coalition may call you. They will ask how the program worked for you, and they may be able to provide information about other programs which can help cover your health care expenses. The person who contacts you will have no information about your health condition, diagnosis, or prescription(s). Any information we receive will be kept confidential, and will be used only for evaluation purposes.

Questions, call 272-9331, Information and Referral, a program of the Human Services Coalition.

Urgent Rx vouchers are only accepted at the following Kinney Drugs locations:

Kinney Drugs 513 N. Cayuga St. Ithaca, NY (Northside) Mon – Sat (9:00 – 6:00) Sun (9–1) (607) 272-8333	Kinney Drugs 33 North St. Dryden, NY Mon – Fri (9:00 – 9:00) Sat (9–6), Sun (9–1) (607) 844-8273	Kinney Drugs 15 E. Main St. Trumansburg, NY Mon – Fri (9:00 – 8:00) Sat (9–6), Sun - closed (607) 387-6661
---	---	---

Figure 3. Follow-up Telephone Survey

1. Voucher was used for: Self Child
2. Was this program: Very easy to use Somewhat easy to use Somewhat difficult to use Very difficult to use
3. Did the hospital/clinic staff explain the program to you clearly? Yes No
4. Did you have any problem filling your prescription? Yes No
5. Were you given any prescriptions that were NOT covered by the voucher? Yes No
5a. How many?
5b. What are those drugs?
6. Do you have health insurance? Yes No
7. What health insurance do you have?
7a. Do you have prescription coverage? Yes No
8. Do you have on-going prescription needs you have trouble paying for? Yes No
9. Have you ever applied or thought about applying for a New York State Health Insurance Program? (Such as Family Health Plus, Child Health Plus, Healthy New York, or Medicaid)?
10. Do you have any children under age 19 who are uninsured? Yes No
11. Are you employed? Yes No

11a. Level of employment

Full-time

Part-time

Self-employed

11b. Is health insurance available through your employer?

Yes

No

11c. Does your employer pay any part of the insurance premium?

Yes

No

Comments

**Figure 4. Database Screen Shots
Client Page**

Startup - [tbl_Client]

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help

Look Up Name

Enter New Patient Information

ClientID

First name Last name

Date of birth

Guardian First Name Last Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone Alternate phone

Enter New Voucher

Voucher #	Date of visit/ voucher issued	Location of service
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/> No voucher rec'd <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="button" value="Survey"/> <input type="button" value="Mailing"/>

Completed Surveys

Voucher number: Date survey complete: Postcard returned:

Record: 963 of 963
Client ID number

Survey Form

Startup - [frm_survey_input]

MS Sans Serif 8 B I U

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help

Type a question for help

Lookup Voucher# []

ClientID [AutoNumber] Phone [] Alternate phone [] Date of birth []

First name [] Last name [] Guardian [] Last Name []

Address [] City [] State NY Zip []

Survey# [Auto] Voucher [] Check me

Calls

Survey #	Date	Time	Outcome	Note

Categories

<p>Employment</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Can't afford employer insurance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insurance not available through work</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insurance available through work, but don't qualify</p>	<p>HNY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> HNY too expensive</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't qualify for HNY</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recently lost job that provided coverage</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know about HNY</p>
<p>Student/Other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full-time student</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No ins. available from school/can't afford school ins</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Recently dropped from parent's insurance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Waiting on source of ins. (spouse, school, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doesn't want to be on a government program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have insurance</p>	<p>State Programs M-aid and FHP</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Don't qualify</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Was enrolled but dropped</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Applied and waiting to hear or has pending appt</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approved and waiting to take effect</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Didn't know about state programs or how to apply</p>

Referral [] Ref type [] PMAP ref [] Dental Inquiry: []

oldclientcat1 [] oldclientcat2 []

Survey

1. Voucher used for: []

2. Was this program: []

3. Did the hospita/clinic staff explain program to you clearly?: []

4. Did you have any problem filling your prescription? []

5. Were you given any prescriptions that were NOT covered by the voucher? []

 5a. How many? [0]

 5b. What are those drugs? []

6. Do you have health insurance? []

7. What health insurance do you have? []

 7a. Do you have prescription coverage? []

8. Do you have ongoing Rx needs you have trouble paying for?: []

9. Have you ever applied or thought about applying for a New York State Health Insurance Program? (Such as Family Health Plus, Child Health Plus, Healthy New York or Medicaid?) []

10. Do you have any children under 19 who are uninsured? []

11. Are you employed? []

 11a. Level of employment []

 11b. Is health insurance available through your employer? []

 11c. Does your employer pay any part of the insurance premium? []

Comments: []

Date completed [] Postcard returned: []

Record: 1222 of 1222

Survey number

Mailing Form

Startup - [tbl_visit]

MS Sans Serif 8 B I U

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help

Type a question for help

Look up Voucher #

ClientID (autoNumber) Phone Alternate phone Date of birth

First name Last name Guardian Last Name

Address City State Zip

Voucher #

Mailing Information

Mailing# (Number) Voucher#

Date of mailing

Date returned (bad mail)

Comment

Record: of 1222

Voucher number

Billing Form

Startup - [frm_billing]

MS Sans Serif 8 B I U

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help

Billing

ID (AutoNumber) Voucher#

Client Name Date of Birth

Doctor Name DEA #

RX #

Date filled

NDC #

Drug name Strength QTY

Date written

Sale amount Plan amount

Store # batch#

Record: 1851 of 1851

Form View

Figure 5. Year One Report, February 2006 – February 2007

<p>Between February 1, 2006 and January 31, 2007, 761 vouchers were issued to 641 different individuals.</p> <p>Convenient Care: 580 Emergency Department: 181</p> <p>REPEAT USERS: As of January 31, 2007, 82 individuals were issued more than one voucher. Of the 82 repeat users, HSC has been able to reach 72 for follow-up evaluations.</p> <p>GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION: 83% Tompkins County, 17% neighboring counties</p> <table><thead><tr><th>AGE RANGE</th><th>PERCENTAGE</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>0-18 yrs</td><td>6.75%</td></tr><tr><td>19-30 yrs</td><td>48%</td></tr><tr><td>31-40 yrs</td><td>23%</td></tr><tr><td>41-50 yrs</td><td>14%</td></tr><tr><td>51-64 yrs</td><td>8%</td></tr><tr><td>65+ yrs</td><td>.25%</td></tr></tbody></table> <p>FOLLOW-UP SUCCESS: 66 % connection rate</p> <p>Out of the 664 individuals with valid phone numbers who received vouchers as of January 31, 2007, HSC had reached and successfully surveyed 440.</p>	AGE RANGE	PERCENTAGE	0-18 yrs	6.75%	19-30 yrs	48%	31-40 yrs	23%	41-50 yrs	14%	51-64 yrs	8%	65+ yrs	.25%
AGE RANGE	PERCENTAGE													
0-18 yrs	6.75%													
19-30 yrs	48%													
31-40 yrs	23%													
41-50 yrs	14%													
51-64 yrs	8%													
65+ yrs	.25%													
<p>SURVEY RESPONSES:</p> <p>98% responded Urgent Rx was Very Easy or Somewhat Easy to Use 95% responded the hospital staff explained how to use the program clearly 91% responded everything prescribed was covered by the voucher</p> <p>36% of clients surveyed are employed (Only recently became a survey question)</p> <p>OUTREACH:</p> <p>All clients for whom we had mailing addresses were sent follow-up mailings, including an individualized letter, Tompkins Rx card, and various materials on subsidized health insurance programs and other resources. In addition, we referred 42 individuals to the Human Services Coalition's Prescription Meds Access Program.</p> <p>PRESCRIPTION STATISTICS:</p> <p>In the first year, we were billed for 1,267 prescriptions.</p> <p>Average of 1.7 prescriptions per individual Average of 7.8 days supply prescribed</p> <p>Days to Fill: 72% of prescriptions were filled the day they were written, and 21% were filled the next day.* * The pharmacies close at 6 p.m.; any prescription issued after this time would necessarily need to be filled the next day.</p>														

COST:

Total cost of prescriptions: **\$21,159.85**
Average prescription cost: **\$16.70**

Urgent Rx Price	Percentage
At minimum cost (\$5)	12%
\$0-\$10	54%
\$10-\$20	21%
\$20-\$40	16%
\$40-\$60	4%
\$60 +	5%

Urgent Rx Client Comments and Anecdotes

“This program saved me from being admitted to the hospital with pneumonia, because without it, I could not have afforded my prescriptions.”

“This way I was able to get the prescription I needed right away.”

“I really appreciated it! It was such a relief to know I wouldn’t have to worry about the cost of my prescriptions, on top of everything else.”

“I’m not even making enough to pay my house bills. Even if the voucher was only for 18 or 20 dollars, it can help buy my son diapers.”

“I was so grateful for this program. I was putting off being seen because I knew I couldn’t afford prescriptions.”

“This is a great program, because I think that there are lots of people in this situation where they are not able to fill the prescriptions they’re written. Thank you so much.”

“I do not have a computer to access information from, so I really appreciated the paper mailing of information.”

“I was surprised and pleased by this program. I would not have been able to fill the prescription for my antibiotic without it.”

She works at McDonald’s full time. She currently has no insurance, but is in the waiting period to get on the employer plan. She has a daughter, who has Child Health Plus.

He owns his own repair shop, and is the only employee. He makes too much to qualify for Medicaid or Family Health Plus. He looked into Healthy New York for the business, and the premium was just too much. He feels his only option for getting health insurance would be to get an outside job with benefits, but he would never have time to keep the shop going as well.

She works full time at Wendy’s at the mall, at \$7.15 per hour. She applied at DSS for Medicaid/Family Health Plus, and made too much to qualify. There is health insurance available through her job, but it is over \$100 per week.

Note: One week’s pay before taxes at \$7.15 per hour is \$286

He is a construction worker. He needs to work a certain amount of hours in order to get health insurance, and right now there is no work.

She does not work. She has two children, and one has cerebral palsy. Both children get Medicaid. Her husband works and could get insurance for them through his work, but it would cost \$500 per month and they cannot afford it.

He is employed by a temp agency, but is laid off right now. He has difficulty staying employed because of numerous health problems. He could buy into the temp agency's plan after working there long enough, but it is \$100 per week, so he would be working for practically nothing

Figure 6. Additional Site Selection Process

1. Maintaining the current pilot at CMC ER and Convenient Care Center in Lansing

Review current experience

- Volume of clients and volume of meds
- Cost – total and average cost/client
- Results of follow-up outreach, and demographics of clients
- Trends each month, focusing on recent months and if they are stable or not
- Ease and efficiency of the process

Project future needs of current pilot (3-5 years)

- Estimate of clients (possible increases as program is more widely known, possible decreases if clients able to access Urgent Rx in different venues)
- Project inflation increases in cost of meds
- Project possible changes in the formulary as additional urgent meds become generic

Project future additions to the fund

- Project the funding stream from United Way
- Is this sufficient for the current program over the next 3-5 years?
- Would the money be used up too fast if other programs were to be funded?
- Consider other factors as appropriate

(It is possible, after these steps, we may decide not to consider any new possible venues for the following year.)

2. Circumstances under which we could be able to consider any new proposals

- Having enough UWTC Urgent Rx funds in reserve to meet current programs for the next 3-5 years.
- Having continued funding for the management and outreach components (either by the Tompkins Health Network or other funder).

3. Setting Criteria for Consideration of New Direct Care Providers

Types of providers who could be considered for participation

- Places where uninsured people receive urgent medical care, and which have someone legally able to write prescriptions for urgent medications.
- Not-for-profit agencies/clinics

Requirements of any new agency: Same eligibility screening that we currently use: Only people who have no health insurance qualify. If they have health insurance, but no prescription insurance, they do NOT qualify for Urgent Rx.

- Abide by all procedures
- Develop outreach follow-up procedures that are within the HPC's capacity or be able to provide these by the new agency
- Work with HPC to train agency staff in the program
- Be able to communicate any policy changes to staff
- Carry pamphlets about Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus
- Provide ongoing feedback as needed
- Provide reports on a defined periodic basis
- Participate openly in periodic reviews (possibly through an operational committee for each entity)

4. Identifying possibilities

- The Health Planning Council Executive Committee and the Tompkins Health Network Board will identify which providers meet the criteria of the types of providers that we will consider for participation. HPC staff will notify these providers of their inclusion.

- Request agency to submit the following information in a proposal:
 - How do you ascertain whether or not people have any health insurance?
 - What do you do to help connect people who are uninsured with subsidized health insurance plans (ex. CHP, Medicaid)?
 - What percentage (and number) of your clients have no health insurance?
 - What percentage (and number) of your clients are on Medicaid (Some Medicaid individuals are alternately covered and not covered).
 - How many visits did you provide last year to patients who had no health insurance?
 - Do you have a sliding-fee scale; if so, what is it?
 - What is the volume and value of pro-bono care that you provide?
 - What percentage of your clients lives in Tompkins County?
 - Anything other information you think would be helpful in us considering your proposal.

If you are proposing that Urgent Rx be used in different departments in your organization, provide the figures below separately for each department.

- Estimate the number of patients in a year's time that would meet the criteria for being covered by an Urgent Rx voucher (for people with no health insurance, on the formulary, 14-day supply maximum.) The formulary is included below.

Requirements of Current agencies

Same eligibility screening currently done (i.e. people are uninsured)

- Abide by all procedures
- Develop outreach follow-up procedures that are within the HPC's capacity or be able to provide these by the new agency
- Work with HPC to train agency staff in the program.
- Carry pamphlets about Child Health Plus and Family Health Plus.
- Provide ongoing feedback as needed.
- Provide reports on a defined periodic basis.
- Participate openly in periodic reviews. (Possibly through an operational committee for each entity)

5. Evaluating possibilities

Evaluate, rank and prioritize the possibilities based on the following criteria:

- Number of people with no insurance
- Potential volume
- Estimated cost
- Amount of pro-bono care that is provided
- Stability of the organization
- Would the agency have adequate staffing to do follow-up evaluations?

- Would we have any different positions on medications for repeat visits at different venues?
- Ease of administration for the HPC

Consider the total fund

- Is there enough money in the fund to consider this expansion?

Start new venues as pilots, possibly designating them for a limited time, or by having a dollar limit

Figure 7. Request for Proposals – Additional Site

To:

Date: March 29, 2007

Urgent Rx is a partnership between the Health Planning Council, Cayuga Medical Center and the United Way of Tompkins County, with Kinney Drugs as the participating pharmacy. The current program is provided in CMC's Emergency Department and Convenient Care Center in Lansing. Our first priority remains the existing venues; these serve the greatest number of uninsured people and are the cornerstone for Urgent Rx.

The purpose of Urgent Rx is:

- 1) To pay for urgently-needed medicine for people who have no health insurance.
- 2) To conduct follow-up outreach to connect people with other resources and health insurance options if possible.

The limitations of Urgent Rx are:

- 1) It has a formulary that contains urgently-needed medications and not chronic medications.
- 2) It provides a limited supply (not more than 14 days) of a medication.

A copy of the program information, authorization and the formulary are attached.

Any expansion of the program is being developed as a collective request to the UW Board from all three partners: HPC Advisory Board, CMC (Dr. David Evelyn, VP Medical Affairs), and the United Way (James Brown, Executive Director). The program is dependent upon sufficient money in the United Way Urgent Rx fund for the prescriptions, and the HPC's continued receipt of the Tompkins Health Network grant to support the management of the program and the follow-up outreach.

The Health Planning Council is now moving ahead to consider the possible expansion of Urgent Rx to additional venues in Tompkins County. At this point, our estimate is that we could set aside about \$13,000/year for any new venues.

We have initially determined that your organizations meet the criteria for being considered as a possible venue for Urgent Rx. These criteria are: 1) places where uninsured people receive urgent medical care, and which have someone legally able to write prescriptions for urgent medications, and 2) not-for-profit agencies/clinics. (If your organization does NOT meet these criteria, please let me know.)

If you are interested in applying, submit your proposal by April 27. Please be advised that after reviewing all the proposals, we could decide not to fund any new venues. We could also decide to fund them for a limited amount, or a limited time. We hope to reach a decision by the end of June and to implement the program in its new location as soon as is feasible after a decision.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Betty Falcão, Director, Health Planning Council

Proposal Application

Provide us with the following information:

Your organization and contact information _____

Proposed location for offering Urgent Rx _____

If you are proposing that Urgent Rx be used in different departments in your organization, provide the figures for question 9 separately for each of the requested departments. Also, if the responses to any of the other questions vary by department, also provide this information for each department.

Serving the Uninsured

1. How do you ascertain whether or not people have any health insurance?
2. What percentage (and number) of your clients have no health insurance?
3. What percentage (and number) of your clients are on Medicaid?
4. How many visits did you provide last year to patients who had no health insurance?
5. Do you have a sliding-fee scale; if so, what is it?
6. What is the volume and value of pro-bono care that you provide?
7. What do you do to help connect people who are uninsured with subsidized health insurance plans (ex. CHP, Medicaid)?
8. What percentage of your clients live in Tompkins County?

Potential Volume

To be eligible for Urgent Rx, patients a) must have NO health insurance and b) must be 18 or older, or have the approval of a parent/guardian.

9. Estimate the number of patients in a year's time that would meet the criteria for being covered by an Urgent Rx voucher (people with no health insurance, prescription for a medication on the formulary, with a 14-day supply maximum.) The formulary is attached.

Once we have completed the review process and chosen an organization, we will work with the organization to determine the operational details of implementing the program at that site. For the purposes of this proposal, the following are minimal guidelines of the program's operation that should be kept in mind:

- Patients must be screened for eligibility for Urgent Rx (have NO health insurance, and be 18 years of age or approved by a parent/guardian) before they receive a voucher, each time they receive a voucher.
- Patients may only receive a voucher for prescriptions that are on the Urgent Rx formulary (generics only, see attached formulary for drugs covered) and the supply of medicine may not exceed 14 days. A maximum of four prescriptions can be covered by one voucher.
- In order to receive the voucher, patients must sign an authorization form which must be returned to HSC. It is the responsibility of the prescriber or other person issuing the voucher, to ensure that the authorization is legible, complete, and signed. At the time of issuing a voucher, the prescriber must also issue program information to the patient.

Figure 8. New Flow of Operations

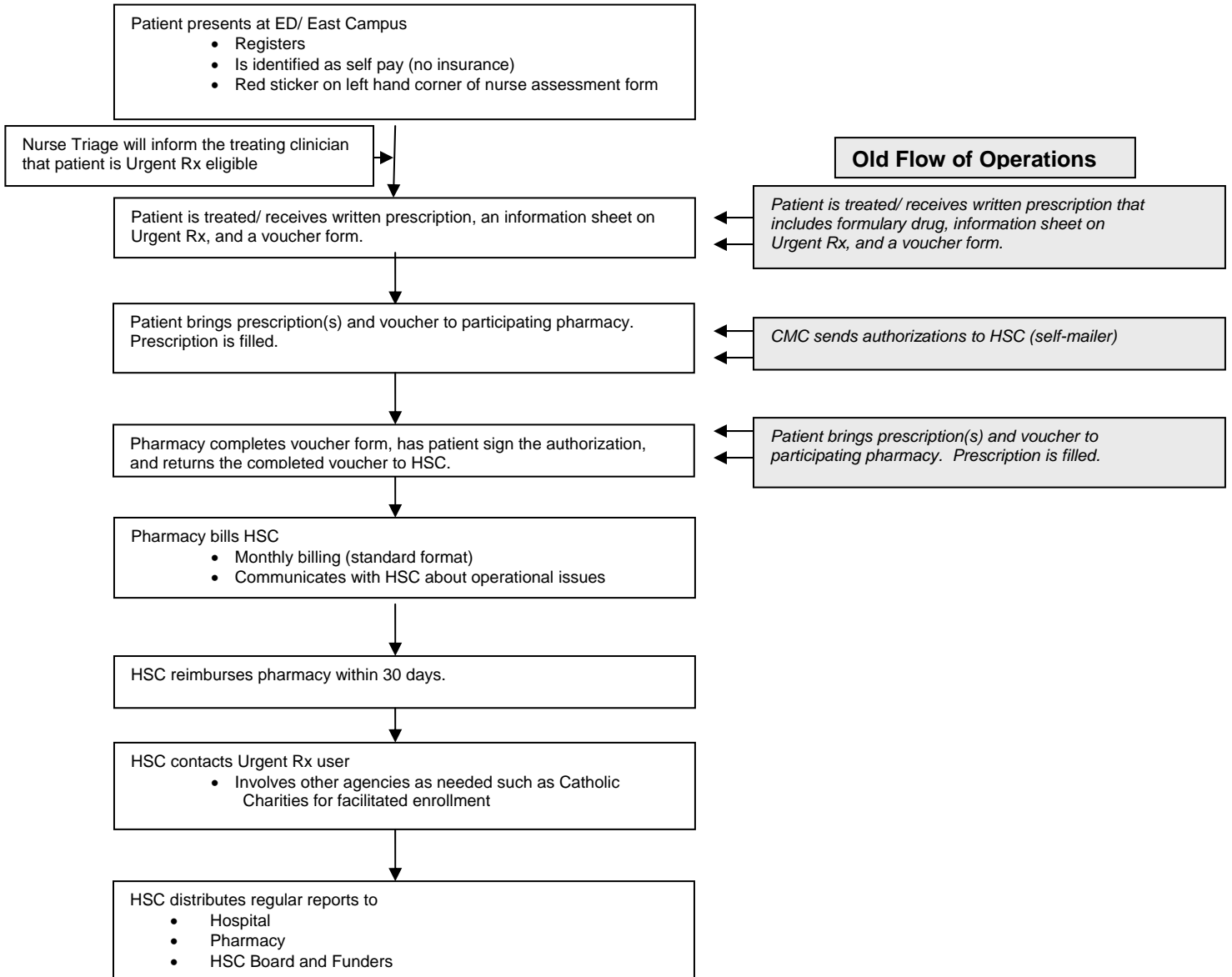



Figure 9. United Way of Tompkins County Brochure

United Way of Tompkins County:
*Supporting Strong People, Strong Families,
and Strong Communities*

Urgent Rx is made possible
by four community partners:
Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County
United Way of Tompkins County
Cayuga Medical Center
Kinney Drugs, Inc.

For more information
on Urgent Rx, please call the Human Services
Coalition at 607-273-8686; for information
on how you may contribute, please contact
United Way of Tompkins County at
607-272-6286.


Thank you!



United Way
of Tompkins County
313 North Aurora Street
Ithaca, New York 14850
607.272.6286
www.uwtc.org

Urgent Rx

is just what the doctor
ordered.



Urgent Rx

helped more than 600
Tompkins County patients
without health insurance
obtain urgently needed
medicine in 2006.

Urgent Rx was created through a collaboration
of the Human Services Coalition, United Way
of Tompkins County, Cayuga Medical Center,
Kinney Drugs, Inc., and the Brooks Family
Foundation. Urgent Rx provides uninsured
patients treated in Cayuga Medical Center's
Emergency Department and Convenient Care
Center at Ithaca with vouchers for prescription
medicine. This enables patients to complete
the recommended treatment plans for their
urgent medical problems, having a direct
impact on their recovery and their health.

With your help, we plan to expand Urgent Rx
in 2007.

United Way

United Way of Tompkins County is committed to addressing unmet health and human service needs in our community by working with local partners to develop solutions. In 2006, United Way partnered with the Human Services Coalition, Cayuga Medical Center, and Kinney Drugs in Tompkins County on a unique approach to help many uninsured people receive much-needed prescriptions that would otherwise most likely not have been filled. In its first year, Urgent Rx provided the financial assistance to fill more than 1,000 prescriptions.

With your help, we want to expand the program so that more area residents without health insurance can afford to fill their prescriptions for urgently needed medication. In addition to medicine prescribed in the Cayuga Medical Center's Emergency Department and Convenient Care Center, we want to offer this assistance to uninsured patients of the Ithaca Free Clinic and to uninsured inpatients being discharged from Cayuga Medical Center.

"You guys are just wonderful. I've worked my whole life and now I find myself in a jam, but you were there. Thank you so much."

—Urgent Rx patient



Reeder Gates; Betty Falcao, Human Services Coalition; and James Brown, president of United Way provided leadership for the development of Urgent Rx.

"This is a great program. I wouldn't have been able to treat my infection without it."

—Urgent Rx patient

How Urgent Rx Works

Urgent Rx covers a limited supply (up to two weeks) of urgently needed medicines. The program covers a limited number of generic-brand medications used to treat common, urgent health-care problems. (It does not cover long-term prescription medication needs.)

Patients who qualify for Urgent Rx receive a voucher with their prescriptions from the doctor, which they take to the nearest Kinney Drugs. There are three Kinney Drugs stores in Tompkins County: Ithaca, Dryden, and Trumansburg.

Urgent Rx patients also receive follow-up outreach from the Human Services Coalition about Federal- and State-funded health-insurance programs and other resources.

How You Can Help

Urgent Rx is a giving option on your 2007 United Way of Tompkins County pledge card. As we expand local access to Urgent Rx, the need for funding of this important Community Impact Program will grow.

THANK YOU for investing in the health of your community... *thank you for being part of the solution!*

Figure 10. Cayuga Medical Center 2006 Annual Report Excerpt



Linda Radomski, MD, board certified in hospice and palliative medicine and internal medicine, joined the Palliative Care Team in 2006.

From the thank-you notes we receive, we know that the financial assistance we provide to those who apply and qualify eases their burdens. Members of our Billing Department, like Bonnie Wemmer, help people understand their hospital bills and work with those who are applying for aid under New York State's new financial assistance guidelines. Bonnie and her colleagues can be reached at (607) 274-4400.

Urgent Rx Provides Needed Relief

Through a community partnership with the United Way of Tompkins County, the Health Planning Council, and Kinney Drugs pharmacies in Tompkins County, Cayuga Medical Center

"This is a great program. I wouldn't have been able to treat my infection without it."

—Urgent Rx Patient

launched Urgent Rx in 2006. In its first year the program helped more than 600 patients, without health insurance or financial resources, obtain urgently needed medicine that was prescribed in the medical center's Emergency Department and Convenient Care Center at Ithaca. This financial assistance, which totaled more than 1,000 prescriptions, enabled these patients to complete their treatment plans. Our patients tell the story:

"You guys are just wonderful. I've worked my whole life, and now I find myself in a jam, but you were there. Thank you so much."

—Urgent Rx Patient



Eric Lessinger, MD, director of Palliative Care, is board certified in hospice and palliative medicine, geriatrics, and family medicine.



Nurses in our new ICU use state-of-the-art technology

Urgent Rx helped over 600 uninsured ED and Convenient Care patients get urgently needed meds.

Figure 11. Cayuga Medical Center Health Visions Magazine, Summer 2007

Community Education

In recognition of outstanding community service, Cayuga Medical Center's Diabetes Education Program was honored in 2006 with the Robert J. Uplinger Award, from the New York State and Bermuda Lions Foundation and the Ithaca Lions Club.

Community education has long been a priority for Cayuga Medical Center: our professional caregivers and physicians share their expertise willingly and often in various community forums. Kendal of Ithaca hosts our monthly Silver Service Lectures on wide ranging topics of interest to seniors. Our Multidisciplinary Cancer Team panel discussions

offer patients and families information on the latest developments in cancer care. Community Heart Savers provides instruction in CPR for families. And our Maternal-Child Health classes for parents on infant care, siblings, breastfeeding, and safety are in demand and well attended.

A schedule of many of our community education programs can be found on the inside back cover of this magazine. Or you can call us at (607) 274-4498 for additional information.

Urgent Rx: What the Doctor Ordered

"This was such a relief. I was crying in the emergency room because I knew I wouldn't be able to afford the medicine I needed, and I was in so much pain. Thank you, thank you, thank you."


This note from an Urgent Rx patient tells the real story of an innovative new service to assist people in need. Through a community partnership with United Way of Tompkins County, the Health Planning Council, and Kinney Drugs pharmacies in Tompkins County, Cayuga Medical Center launched Urgent Rx in 2006. In its first year the program helped more than 600 patients, without health insurance or financial resources, obtain urgently needed medicine that was prescribed in the medical center's Emergency Department and Convenient Care Center at Ithaca. This financial assistance,

which totaled more than 1,000 prescriptions, enabled these patients to complete their treatment plans.

Funding for Urgent Rx comes from United Way of Tompkins County, which received a generous challenge grant from the Brooks Family Foundation that has been matched by local donors.

Financial Assistance for Hospitalization

Each year, Cayuga Medical Center helps people who need hospital care but who simply cannot afford it. In 2006, we provided financial assistance totaling \$419,647 to under- and uninsured patients.

From the thank-you notes we receive, we know that the financial assistance we provide to those who apply and qualify eases their burdens. Members of our Billing Department, like Bonnie Wemmer, help people understand their hospital bills and work with those who are applying for aid under New York State's new financial assistance guidelines. Bonnie and her colleagues can be reached at (607) 274-4400. 



Bonnie Wemmer, Billing Department

Figure 12. Guest Column UWTC

February 1, 2007

The Ithaca Journal

Guest Column Submission

by Charles Walcott, 2006 Campaign Chair, United Way of Tompkins County and Professor and Dean of University Faculty, Cornell University

Often times it is easy to get so busy with our daily routines that we are not aware of those in our community who may be experiencing some difficult times. The elderly couple who needs some minor home repairs that will enable them to stay in their residence, the school-aged child who is experiencing emotional difficulties after the death of a parent, the young adult with special needs looking for employment, the recent college graduate diagnosed with breast cancer, the distraught parent who needs counseling services, or the uninsured patient who needs a prescription filled. These examples represent a very small sampling of people in Tompkins County who need our help throughout the year.

We are fortunate that we live in a wonderfully caring community that is blessed with a wide variety of support services for people who need assistance; food, clothing, shelter, respite care, daycare programs, literacy programs, disaster preparedness training, recreational programs, transportation for people with disabilities, and counseling. These programs and services and many more too numerous to list are available because of the thousands of generous, individual donors and hundreds of businesses who support the annual United Way of Tompkins County Community Campaign. Their gifts help to fund more than one-hundred, year-round, health and human service programs, in addition to the two targeted areas of care; Hunger and Food Insecurity and the Urgent Rx Prescription Program.

One of the identified priority areas of need in Tompkins County is affordable health care, which affects individuals and especially, families, several who are the working poor. The Health Planning Council, Cayuga Medical Center, Kinney Drugs, and United Way of Tompkins County are addressing this unmet basic need. The goal is simple and twofold:

1. To provide prescriptions to uninsured individuals who receive treatment at Cayuga Medical Center's Emergency Room or at Convenient Care Center in Ithaca, to help resolve their immediate, urgent health issue, and also to prevent more serious medical needs in the future.
2. To provide information about other prescription and health insurance programs available to the uninsured.

In the year since the Urgent Rx Prescription Program began, it has served hundreds of patients by providing free prescriptions. The majority of the drugs, mostly antibiotics, pain relievers, and steroids have not been expensive; the average prescription costs \$17.44. Participants were newborns through senior citizens from throughout Tompkins County, who, for one reason or another, have faced financial challenges, and do not have any health insurance.

The Urgent Rx Prescription Program has been supported by the generosity of the Brooks Family Foundation. This year, the Brooks Family Foundation has again challenged United Way of Tompkins County to match its grant of \$35,000. So far, we have raised donations totaling \$20,000 leaving \$15,000 yet to go. We hope that you might be willing to help. Consider the effect of even a small gift of \$10 or \$20. Matched by the Foundation, this becomes \$20 or \$40, which is enough to provide a potentially lifesaving antibiotic prescription. It is a remarkably cost-effective way of helping our friends and neighbors in their time of need.

While United Way's Community Campaign is almost over for this year, we are so thankful to have received donations to date of \$1,855,150, over 97% of our \$1.9 million goal, from generous friends and

neighbors, but we still need to complete the match of the challenge grant for Urgent Rx. The Campaign officially ends on March 31, 2007.

Are you able to help us maximize this challenge grant? Your gift to support the Urgent Rx Prescription Program is truly needed. You most likely will never know the person you helped, but be assured that you have definitely impacted someone's life in a positive way. Please contact United Way of Tompkins County, 313 N. Aurora Street, Ithaca, NY 14850 or call 272-6286.

Figure 13. UWTC Press Release

February 8, 2006

UWTC Press Release

Urgent Rx Pilot Program Up and Running in Tompkins County

Ithaca, NY - The Human Services Coalition, Cayuga Medical Center, Kinney Drugs in Tompkins County, and United Way of Tompkins County are pleased to announce the start of the Urgent Rx pilot program. When an uninsured patient receives care at Cayuga Medical Center's Emergency Room or Convenient Care Center in Ithaca, Urgent Rx will provide free generic medications, from a limited list.

At this time, the four Kinney Drugs' pharmacies in Tompkins County are the only providers for Urgent Rx prescriptions. In order to qualify for Urgent Rx, the uninsured patient must get the prescription written during the visit at either Cayuga Medical Center's Emergency Department or Convenient Care Center in Ithaca and the prescriptions must be for medicines on the approved list that was developed in consultation with physicians at Cayuga Medical Center.

Funding for Urgent Rx is from United Way of Tompkins County, which received a generous challenge grant from the Brooks Family Foundation that has been matched by local donors. All donations raised for Urgent Rx will pay for the prescribed medications. Donors can still direct their United Way gifts to Urgent Rx, and all donations will be matched dollar for dollar through March 31, 2006.

United Way of Tompkins County is committed to addressing the unmet health and human service needs in our community by working with local partners to develop solutions. As United Way partners with the Human Services Coalition, Cayuga Medical Center, and Kinney Drugs in Tompkins County on this unique collaboration, many uninsured people will receive much-needed prescriptions that would otherwise most likely not be filled.

United Way continues to be at the center of the health and human service network in Tompkins County. Questions and additional information about Urgent Rx can be directed to Betty Falcão, Health Planning Council, at 273-8686 or eaf6@cornell.edu.

Appendix B: Other Prescription Assistance Programs and Figures

Origins of Pilot Project

In 2001, the HPC's staff and Acute/Primary Care Committee began to explore the problem of uninsured residents and how the lack of health insurance often leads to greater health problems. With statistics suggesting that the cost of and need for prescriptions was steadily rising, HPC began exploring the problem of prescription medicine for the uninsured. Several local human service agencies were brought to the table to discuss available resources and their perception of their clients' needs regarding prescription medicines. A working paper was developed to analyze the issues and models of providing a free community pool of generic prescriptions (Figure 14. Free Community Pool of Selected Prescriptions, p. 36).

Meanwhile, in 2003, the United Way of Tompkins County (UWTC), in partnership with the Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, completed COMPASS II, a community-wide assessment of needs and strengths. One of the top identified unmet needs was accessing affordable health care, particularly for people with no health insurance. After significant input from local experts and extensive research, a work plan was developed to create multiple programs to address the prescription medication gap. Initial efforts were centered on no and low-cost initiatives to increase access and participation in various existing programs for free and reduced cost prescriptions.

PMAP (Prescription Meds Access Program)

In 2004, with new funding from the Tompkins Health Network, HPC launched PMAP (Prescription Meds Access Program). These funds were used to support an Access Coordinator to work with individuals to help them access subsidized health care programs, pharmaceutical programs for free medications, and other cost savings tips. In addition to offering direct assistance in finding resources for free and low-cost drugs to individuals, PMAP developed *Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs Guide for Tompkins County*. HPC made this document available to the public in doctor's offices, human service agencies, libraries, and various other venues. This guide is available in both hard-copy and an on-line interactive version (prescription.hsctc.org). (Figures 15. Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs, p. 44 & Figure 16. Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs, p. 53)

TompkinsRx

HPC also provided assistance to the Tompkins County Legislature to establish a free, immediate-use card for prescription discounts. In 2005, the Legislature introduced *TompkinsRx* which requires no enrollment forms and uninsured or underinsured individuals can present the card at any pharmacy in the county and receive an average savings of 20% off retail prices. The card can also be used for mail-order purchase for even larger savings. (Figure 17. Tompkins Rx Discount Program, p. 54) HPC continues to distribute *TompkinsRx* cards as well as provide support to pharmacies in the use of the cards.

Figure 14. Free Community Pool of Selected Generic Prescriptions for Tompkins County Residents Issues & Models - Working Discussion
Draft November 4, 2002

This paper tries to lay out the components of various models and the questions which would need to be decided for any such models to be implemented. At this point we are not trying to answer all the questions, although a discussion of the answers should be helpful.

Proposed Program

Filling prescriptions for generic medicines at NO COST to the eligible patient.

Organization of the charts below:

- Brief description of 3 different models and their potential advantages and disadvantages.
- Different Drug formularies
- Who is eligible
- Pharmacy participation
- Establishing and managing the fund.

Need for the program

An estimated 10 – 25% of people in our community do not get their prescriptions filled because they do not have enough money. As a result some people take:

- **only half the dose**
- **just a few pills of a course of antibiotics**
- **their daily dose only when a chronic condition flares up**
- **medication prescribed for someone else**
- **just the sample received from the provider**

Name

We would need an appropriate name for this program. At this point I'm calling it the **Free Generic Program** or **FGP**.

Note: if there is a co-pay (of even \$2), then we would need to take the term "free" out of the name; perhaps to Generic Prescription Assistance Fund, or GPAF?

Estimates on potential use of this program

The actual number of people in Tompkins County who do not have insurance coverage for prescription medicine is not known. To give some indication of the potential use for a generic community pool, we asked about the number of people who receive care at Cayuga Medical Center and had no health insurance, Medicaid or Medicare coverage. In 2001 this was:

275 inpatient visits
2,823 emergency room visits
2,113 visits to the Convenient Care Center-Ithaca
5,211 Total

The number without prescription coverage would be higher because some of the people on Medicare or basic health insurance would not have prescription coverage.

Brief Description	Low Cost Admin	Midrange Admin	High Cost Admin
<p>Information is in its own column except where the info would apply to more than one model. If then the info is stretched across the relevant columns.</p>	<p>Advisory Committee – Policy Direction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be part of a not-for-profit agency • Establish policies for the program • Solicit funds, both to start and as needed • Establish criteria for formulary, update periodically • Review pharmacy bids • Meet quarterly to review the program and to conduct fund-raising as needed. 		
	<p>Administrative Oversight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribute program policies and materials to providers; answer questions • Sign-up pharmacies to participate in the program. • Track dollars owed to participating pharmacies, and pay them dollars owed. • Review prescription use on an ongoing basis to screen for mis-use. Notify the Advisory Committee if funds are getting short. Also providers and pharmacists if program is in hiatus. 		
	<p style="text-align: center;">Physician decides eligibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physicians use FGP program criteria to decide if patient is eligible for the free meds. These include that patient does not have prescription insurance and that patient states they are below the financial limit. • Provider uses FGP prescription pad to prescribe. • Patient goes to participating pharmacy and gets free meds. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Proxy eligibility</p> <p>If someone is eligible for _____ (the identified programs) then they are eligible for FGP.</p> <p>FGP cards could be dispensed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An agency which has already documented an individual's financial status • A pharmacist who is given proof of eligibility for one of the proxy programs. 	<p style="text-align: center;">FGP Case Manager eligibility</p> <p>FGP Case manager would issue card based upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either proof of proxy eligibility, • or having the client fill out financial documentation forms and determining that they meet the criteria. <p>FGP Case manager could be sure to refer clients to other programs if eligibility seems probable.</p>
	<p>Provider would preferably prescribe a generic medication at the visit. Or the pharmacist could call back to the provider to change a prescription to generic to qualify for program.</p>		

Costs:	Admin: ?	Admin:?	Admin:?
	Meds: Depends on the formulary chosen, any limitations on who is eligible or number of meds, co-pays.		
	If additional funds, would we increase the eligibility income guidelines, or expand the formulary, or pieces of each?		
	Low Cost Admin	Midrange Admin	High Cost Admin
Potential Advantages and Disadvantages	<p><u>DIS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With no documented financial checks on the patients there would be a chance that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> they are eligible for other programs such as Medicaid they make more than our income guidelines Puts an extra strain on the providers to ask patients questions to see if they are eligible for FGP. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not frequent enough checks to be assess if patient is getting too many pain meds possibly for a drug habit or for sale. No screen for eligibility to other programs. <p><u>AD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily available on weekends. Least hassle for client Less intrusive for client Least cost 	<p><u>DIS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff of proxy programs might not have the time to mention FGP and issue the card. Staff of proxy programs might misinterpret our financial criteria and mistakenly issue cards. Harder for after-hours coverage With many people in the community with cards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Harder to notify if program is reduced or in hiatus. Harder to control use. <p><u>AD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client doesn't need to go to more than one agency. Clients likely to be screened for other programs. Periodic re-evaluation of financial status. 	<p><u>DIS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client needs to come to yet one more agency. Harder for after-hours coverage. More intrusive for client Highest Cost <p><u>AD</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available to clients who are not enrolled in some other program. Make sure clients are screened for other programs. Help clients enroll in Pharmaceutical company patient assistance programs. Could do all the program administration functions.

Drugs covered	Low Cost/Admin	Midrange	High Cost/Admin	Florida AIDS Pharmacy Program- description on next page.
<p>Which drugs?</p> <p>What criteria for selecting drugs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic – where generic as effective as brand • No controlled substances <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just antibiotics and pain medication for urgent need such as: NSAID (pain and inflammation) Antibiotics (penicillin, tetracycline, cephalosporin, bacitracin, beta lactamase inhibitors). • Most common in general use (All in BC/BS data for regional enrollees are brand drugs.) • Most common in ER (CMC data) • Keep people out of the ER • Contribute most to public health – drugs to address primary causes of death • With high cost to patients (considering frequency of dose) • SSRI(antidepressants), PPI (heartburn, etc), HMG (cholesterol), ACE (high blood pressure) • Long term disease prevention. <p>Depends upon whether or not children and seniors are eligible (they have CHP and EPIC).</p>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially, almost all drugs were filled. All drugs had to be approved by the FDA. • Extremely expensive and certain pain medications had to get prior approval by the lead agency. • When the program took on a "managed care" philosophy, the formulary became more restrictive.
Some Considerations	<p>Only covering pain medications and antibiotics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More potential misuse due to having coverage for pain medications. ▪ Covering only two types of meds allows for more control of total number of meds ▪ Less financial strain of program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - only two types of meds - these meds are short-term use meds <p>Covering most drugs including those for long term use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More for clients who suffer from long term illnesses not just acute problems ▪ Correspondingly higher cost as the formulary increases. 			
Who decides	Advisory Committee w/input from physicians and pharmacists			Lead agency w/Medical Services Committee, (clients, physicians, other health practitioners and community members.) Periodic review.

<p>Other issues: Number of Meds</p>	<p>Should there be a limit on the number of times an individual client can use the program? Or a limit on the number of days medication that can be dispensed? These decisions will vary somewhat depending upon the formulary criteria selected.</p> <p>Some considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the number of pain medications depending on the severity of the illness. (Arthritis is obviously going to be a prolonged prescription of meds) • No limit on antibiotics due to the limited number of the needed medication. (what if maintenance?) • Cover most of the prescriptions depending on the illness. 		<p>No limits were set for the number of prescriptions per year (these people have no money).</p>				
<p>Co-pay</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Same as Medicaid (\$2)? Vary depending upon the cost of the generic?</p>		<p>Clients encouraged to contribute but not denied services due to inability to pay.</p>				
<p>How informed of what the formulary includes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers and pharmacists – program info • Provider informs patient of subsidy programs • Consumers- also receive FGP program information by pharmacist when medication given. 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="966 656 1270 764"> <p>Case Managers give clients formulary with program information</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1270 656 1572 764"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="966 764 1270 909"></td> <td data-bbox="1270 764 1572 909"> <p>FGP Case Manager also does public information about program and formulary</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Case Managers give clients formulary with program information</p>			<p>FGP Case Manager also does public information about program and formulary</p>	<p>CMs informed clients of different programs upon intake, doctors informed patients when writing scrip.</p>
<p>Case Managers give clients formulary with program information</p>							
	<p>FGP Case Manager also does public information about program and formulary</p>						

Description of Florida AIDS Pharmacy Program

Background: This describes a program in FL which was funded by federal and state dollars through the Ryan White CARE Act for HIV/AIDS services. The patient would receive a prescription from their doctor and take it to their HIV/AIDS case manager (CM). The CM would determine if the client was eligible for the program and complete a referral form documenting eligibility. The form and a copy of the prescription would be faxed to the pharmacy which would fill the prescription and deliver it to the patient's house. The CM mailed the original scrip and copy of the referral form to the pharmacy. At the end of each month the pharmacy prepared a bill to the lead agency with documentation of each prescription filled. The lead agency checked the bill for accuracy and paid it according to the contract.

Who is eligible?	Low Cost/Admin	Midrange	High Cost/Admin	Florida AIDS Pharmacy Program
Income guidelines	Could be set by FGP.	Dependent upon people being eligible for identified referral programs.	Could be set by FGP.	Clients had to fall at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.
Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit to Tompkins County residents ONLY • Should we exclude children and seniors because they can access Child Health Plus and EPIC? • Maybe limit just to elderly and disabled? • What if people are on the Medicaid spend-down category? 			<p>Could not have prescription coverage or be eligible for other pay or sources for the service. If eligible for Medicaid, CM would guide patient through application process, pharmacy would fill scrip, would submit to Medicaid for payment.</p>
Who decides if eligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physician office at time of visit based on the patient not having prescription insurance coverage and other program financial guidelines. • Pharmacist when patient says they can't afford a prescription. • This would put more strain on the physician but would save in cost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral agencies give out FGP cards if client meets guidelines for one of the proxy programs. • Pharmacist when patient 1) shows their FGP card or 2) says they can't afford a prescription but patient can show a proxy card. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program case manager • Staff of human service agencies that have been pre-approved to do this. 	<p>Guidelines were partly set by federal and state restrictions and by the Medical Services Committee. CM's were responsible to determine eligibility within guidelines.</p>

What is proof of eligibility?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special sticker put on back of regular prescription slip by physician • Use of special prescription pad. • Word of the pharmacist that it was needed. 	FGP card Good for six-months (?) Re-certified through proxy agency	FGP card Good for six-months Re-certified through proxy agency or FGP	Denial by Medicaid, pay stubs, proof of HIV status.
Info on Eligibility	Info on special stickers formulary income eligibility guidelines all participating pharmacies	Info on FGP card- full name, address, formulary, participating pharmacies, expiration date?	Info on FGP card-full name, address, formulary, participating pharmacies, expiration date?	
	Note: Formulary is likely to be too many drugs to list on back of sticker or card.			

Pharmacy participation	Low Cost/Admin	Midrange	High Cost/Admin	Florida AIDS Pharmacy Program
	What we're asking pharmacies to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - secure patient permission to give info to program administrator - give program info brochure to patient at time of dispensing drugs - send a monthly statement to request payment (with patient name, medication name, cost of generic and service charge.) 		
	-to decide if patient eligible based on proxy card of their saying they can't afford the meds			
Who will approach to seek participation	??? Could be an Advisory Committee member, HPC staff, Program administrator staff			An RFP process was conducted yearly. Pharmacy entered into a subcontract with the lead agency. Rates and requirements were identified and negotiated.
How many to approach	How many needed to start? Any maximum for participating?			With an RFP process, pharmacies came to us.

Establishing the fund	Low Cost/Admin	Midrange	High Cost/Admin	Florida AIDS Pharmacy Program
Initial pool	Who solicits? How much needed?			This program was funded by state and federal funds.
Replenishing the fund	Who does? At what point should this be started?			The CARE Council would reallocate funds yearly, based on prior year's expenditures.

Managing the Fund	Low Cost/Admin	Midrange	High Cost/Admin	Florida AIDS Pharmacy Program
Deciding fees	Both for generic med and service fee – ??? Could be an Advisory Committee member, HPC staff, and/or Program administrator staff?			As much as possible, fees were set prior to RFP process, negotiations occurred between lead agency and pharmacy. Pharmacy charged Average Wholesale Price (AWP) less 15%, plus a \$2.00 service fee per scrip.
Reimbursing pharmacies	Who does? How often? <u>Monthly</u> How quickly? <u>In full or payment plan if needed on bulk prescriptions</u>			Pharmacy submitted monthly bill for services rendered with proof of referral.
Tracking – who will do and how will they do this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For potential mis-use? Number of prescriptions in a year? Decide if someone is banned from program and then communicate this with which parties? 			Tracking was done by the pharmacy and by the lead agency. Pharmacy made sure that patients were not abusing the system by "doctor hopping."
If run out of money	How notify everyone if program stops – consumers, advocates, physicians, pharmacies			Medical and pharmaceutical services were deemed the highest priority allocations by the federal, state, and local bodies, so running out of funds was not an option and not likely to happen.
Weekend Access	Access through prescribing physician	Access if have a proxy card	Need to have a person on call.	Most patients saw their physician during the week, so this wasn't a big problem for the system. Some CM agencies had Saturday hours. Patients were able to get the medications they needed within an acceptable time period. ER's prescribed enough to get patients through to Monday when they could access the program.

Figure 15. Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs

Finding Lower-Cost Prescription Drugs Guide for Tompkins County

This guide was developed by the Health Planning Council, a program of the Human Services Coalition to provide information to Tompkins County residents and human services agencies. It provides information about options to help pay for prescription medicine. It does not provide medical, financial or insurance advice.
November 18, 2004

An estimated 10 – 15% of people in our community have difficulty getting their prescriptions filled because they do not have insurance coverage for drugs and do not have enough money to pay out of pocket. Many uninsured adults or their children are eligible for a public state or federal program that helps pay for health care including medicine. Seniors in New York State have the option to enroll in a prescription assistance plan that can significantly lower the cost of purchasing their medicine. Still, other resources and strategies exist that can save people money if they are not eligible for a public program.

Table of Contents

(Also on the web site of the Human Services Coalition, www.hsctc.org, where it has live links.)

- A. Cost Savings Tips for Everyone
- B. New York State Attorney General's Rx Site – price comparisons of 25 drugs
- C. CHP – Child Health Plus for Children up to age 19
- D. FHP – Family Health Plus for Parents and Adults without Children
- E. EPIC – the New York State Prescription Assistance Program for those age 65+
- F. Medicare Approved Discount Cards
- G. Healthy New York, Small Businesses, Sole Proprietors, and Uninsured Working Individuals
- H. PMAP – Prescription Meds Access Program – for Tompkins County residents
- I. Rx Patient Assistance Programs from pharmaceutical companies
- J. Other: pregnant women, veterans, mental health, pregnancy prevention, HIV infection
- K. Buying Drugs from Canada – A Report by the Health Planning Council

A. Cost Savings Tips for Everyone

1. Shop around.

The price of a drug can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy. Local pharmacies are listed in the yellow pages. Also, you can compare the price of the 25 most common prescription drugs carried in your local pharmacies by using the price comparison feature of the NYS Attorney General website

(www.nyagr.org)

2. Save money by asking about generic alternatives.

The difference in price could be significant. Many brand name medications have less expensive generic formulations in the same dosage, strength, quality, performance, and intended use. A few types of medication should not be interchanged with generics because of slight difference in absorption rates.

Talk to your doctor. Also visit the FDA website (www.fda.gov) which has information about generic medicines.

3. Ask about a less expensive brand of medication.

Sometimes an older brand of drug may be just as effective as a newer version.

4. Ask about an over the counter (OTC) alternative. Many over the counter products are as effective as some of their brand name counterparts and considerably less expensive. For example, antihistamines, pain relievers and antacids can often be purchased over the counter for less than your prescription co-pay.

5. Can your pills be split? If your medicine comes in a double dosage, you can sometimes cut costs by asking your doctor to prescribe a drug at double dose so you can divide the tablets at home with a pill splitter. For instance, both the 10-milligram (mg) and 20-mg pills of lisinopril (Prinivil) for high blood pressure cost about \$27 for a 30-day supply. If you need only 10-mg, you can buy the 20-mg version and cut the pills in half, reducing your cost to \$14 per month.

Note: This is not suggesting that you take your prescribed strength pill and cut it in half. Some tablets come scored to make splitting easier.

6. If you are on a maintenance medication, buy a larger supply. Sometimes buying a 3 month supply rather than a 1 month supply at a time is cheaper.

7. If you're trying a new prescription, ask your doctor for samples or buy a smaller supply.

8. Learn about your health benefit plan. What are the features of your coverage?

- Do you have prescription drug coverage?
- What are your co-pays or deductibles? Do they vary by drug?
- Does your plan require a formulary?
- Does your plan have a mail-order program option which allows you to save money?
- If you don't have prescription drug coverage, does your health plan have arrangements with select pharmacies to provide discounts to its members?

9. Consider a prescription drug discount card.

Many pharmacy benefit management companies offer a prescription drug discount card that can save you some money off the retail price at participating drug stores. Some may also provide access to mail order programs. If you are already covered for prescription drugs through an insurance plan or you are a member of EPIC, a discount card will most likely not be a better option. Not all cards are the same. Some carry membership fees and require you to submit an enrollment application. You should make sure the pharmacy you use accepts the discount card.

10. Consider life style changes that may help you reduce dependence on certain medicine.

These may include changes in diet, more exercise or other self-care methods. Check with your doctor for suggestions that may be helpful to you.

11. Buy your drugs through mail-order or online pharmacies.

Sometimes filling your prescriptions through an online or mail-order pharmacy can save money.

However, you should be cautious as some internet sites may not have appropriate oversight and expose you to outdated or substandard products.

- Look for websites bearing the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS) seal. (www.nabp.net/vipps) These sites are licensed and have regulatory state and federal oversight.
- Only order your drugs from sites that require a doctor's prescription.
- Make sure there is a licensed pharmacist who can answer your questions.
- Make sure to ask about shipping charges and check to see if they take your insurance.
- Visit the Federal Drug Administration website (<http://www.fda.gov/>) for more information

B. New York Attorney General's website.

The price of a drug can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy. You can compare the price of the most common prescription drugs carried in your local pharmacies by using the price comparison feature of the NYS Attorney General website (www.nyagr.org)

C. Child Health Plus (www.health.state.ny.us/) Child Health Plus is NYS's health insurance program for children up to age 19. Your children can qualify if they do not have health insurance. There is no monthly premium for families whose monthly income is up to \$2,513 for a family of four. Families with higher incomes pay a monthly premium of \$9 or \$15 a month per child, depending on their income and family size. For larger families, the monthly fee is capped at three children. If your monthly income is over \$3,928 for a family of 4, you would pay the full premium that is charged by the health plan.

Child Health Plus provides comprehensive health coverage including well visits, specialty visits, laboratory, x-rays, and diagnostic services, hospitalization, dental visits, vision care, prescription drugs, speech and hearing services, and much more. There are no co-payments for services under Child Health Plus, so you don't have to pay anything when your child receives care through these plans.

Tompkins County - for help in enrolling in CHP, call 1-800-231-0744.

D. Family Health Plus (www.health.state.ny.us/)

Family Health Plus is a public health insurance program for single adults, parents, and couples without children who are between the ages of 19 and 64 with limited income. People who do not have health insurance may be eligible if their income is too high to qualify for Medicaid. A single adult with a monthly income of \$749 or a couple without children and a monthly income of \$1,010 will qualify. A family size of 2 (parent and a child) can qualify with a monthly income of \$1,515.

Family Health Plus provides comprehensive health coverage including primary care, dental care, lab and diagnostic tests, hospitalization, prescription medicine, diabetic supplies, and many other services. There is no annual premium under this plan.

Tompkins County - for help in enrolling, call 1-800-231-0744.

E. EPIC (www.health.state.ny.us/)

EPIC is NYS's prescription assistance program for people 65 years of age and older. Seniors are eligible if they have an annual income of \$35,000 or less if single, or \$50,000 or less if married. You may be eligible for the fee plan or deductible plan depending on your income. Under the fee plan, there is an annual fee and you pay for your medicine according to a co-pay schedule. There is no annual fee for the deductible plan, but you must pay up to a certain amount before the co-pay schedule is effective.

If you receive full Medicaid benefits or have other prescription coverage that is better than EPIC then you are not eligible for EPIC benefits.

To find out more about EPIC call (1-800- 332-3742) between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Local contacts for information:

274-5482 County Office for the Aging (COFA)

273-1511 Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP),
a program of Lifelong, formerly the Senior Citizens' Council

F. Medicare Approved Discount Cards (www.medicare.gov)

If you are eligible for a Medicare-approved drug discount card, you can save between 11%-18% on many brand name drugs and even more on generic drugs. This benefit is available to you regardless of your income, and has no effect on your existing coverage. You may have to pay up to \$30 annually for a drug card.

If you have limited income, you will not have to pay any annual enrollment fee, and you may also be eligible for an additional \$600 credit to help you pay for prescriptions. In New York State, EPIC coordinates the credit with its members.

Local contacts for information:

274-5482 County Office for the Aging (COFA)

273-1511 Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP),
a program of Lifelong, formerly the Senior Citizens' Council

G. Healthy New York (www.HealthyNY.com)

Healthy New York is a lower cost health insurance option for small businesses that do not contribute towards health insurance, uninsured sole proprietors, and working individuals without health insurance. New York State sponsors this program through health maintenance organizations in your area.

The benefit package covers essential health needs including inpatient and outpatient services, physician visits, maternity care, diagnostic testing and x-ray, and emergency services. A limited prescription benefit can be included at additional costs. There is a co-payment for services which are provided by participating providers.

For more information, call 1-866-Healthy NY (1-866-432-5849)

H. Prescription Meds Access Program (PMAP) – Tompkins County

What if you don't have any insurance for prescription drugs? PMAP connects residents of Tompkins County with resources and strategies to obtain free or lower cost medicine. Based on information you provide, a representative may:

1. Refer you to a health insurance coverage plan,
2. Assist you with applying to one of the pharmaceutical company patient assistance programs for free or low-cost drugs, or
3. Suggest other options.

PMAP does not charge for its services. To talk to a PMAP representative, call the Information and Referral line, 272-9331 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

PMAP is provided free by the Health Planning Council, a program on the Human Services Coalition.

I. RX Patient Assistance Programs

Information about pharmaceutical company patient assistance programs can be found on www.phrma.org, (Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America). Also, PMAP can help you apply and does not charge for its services.

J. Other: pregnant women, veterans, mental health, pregnancy prevention, HIV infection

You might be eligible for one of these programs:

Pregnant Women: MOMS, call 274-6622, Tompkins County Health Department

Veterans: www.va.gov; 272-1084 for Veterans Administration; 272-1084 VA clinic in Ithaca

Mental Health: 274-6200 for the Tompkins County Mental Health Clinic

Pregnancy Prevention: 273-1513, Ithaca office, Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes

HIV Infection: Toll free in-state 1-800-542-2437

K. Buying Drugs from Canada – A Report by the Health Planning Council (October 2004)

Given the rising cost of prescription drugs and interest in buying less expensive drugs from Canadian pharmacies, the Health Planning Council (HPC) Advisory Board has reviewed the role other governmental agencies have taken with regard to providing information to consumers. The HPC Advisory Board decided to make this report available below.

The report provides information about options to help pay for prescription medicine.

It does not provide medical, financial or insurance advice.

Topics addressed in this report include:

- ❖ Why Canadian?
- ❖ Is Buying Drugs from Canadian Pharmacies Legal?
- ❖ What Are Other Counties in New York State Doing?
- ❖ What Are Other States Doing?
- ❖ What Are Safety Issues to Consider?
- ❖ Canadian Regulatory Agencies and Professional Associations
- ❖ How Has the United States Food and Drug Administration Responded?

Why Canadian?

Many U.S. citizens purchase their medicine online from Canada where prices are often lower due to the cost controls imposed by the Canadian government. People who have high out-of-pocket costs for prescriptions are most likely even to consider purchasing Canadian. These include those with no health insurance, no prescription coverage with their health insurance, or very high co-pays with their prescription insurance.

The savings can be substantial; our survey comparing the ten drugs most frequently used by a Central New York group enrolled in BlueCross/ BlueShield showed savings of 43 – 60%. Not all prescriptions can be filled at Canadian pharmacies or websites. These include controlled substances, medicines that cannot be shipped because they require refrigeration and drugs that are not available in Canada. Other medicines, such as generic formulations, may not be cheaper through Canadian sources.

Is Buying Drugs from Canadian Pharmacies Legal?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) state that importing drugs into the United States violates the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. (Web source). This includes:

- Medicine made in other countries if it is not approved by the FDA or if it does not meet all FDA approval requirements;
- Prescription medicine originally manufactured in the U.S., but distributed in other countries, so its purchase by U.S. residents is considered re-importation.

The FDA has a policy on the personal shipment of drugs that allows its officials to use enforcement discretion under certain circumstances:

1. when the intended use is appropriately identified, such use is not for treatment of a serious condition, and the product is not known to represent a significant health risk; or
2. when a) the intended use is unapproved and for a serious condition for which effective treatment may not be available domestically either through commercial or clinical means; b) there is no known commercialization or promotion to persons residing in the U.S. by those involved in the distribution of the product at issue; c) the product is considered not to represent an unreasonable risk; and d) the individual seeking to import the product affirms in writing that it is for the patient's own use (generally not more than 3 month supply) and provides the name and address of the doctor licensed in the U.S. responsible for his or her treatment with the product, or provides evidence that the product is for the continuation of a treatment begun in a foreign country. (Source: RPM Chapter 9, Subchapter, Coverage of Personal Importations)

What Are Other Counties in New York State Doing?

Several counties are trying to help its residents by offering drug card programs that lower the cost of prescription drugs at participating pharmacies or at selected online pharmacies.

Broome, (www.broomerx.com) Westchester (www.westchesterrx.com) , Ulster (www.ulsterrx.com), and Chemung counties (www.chemungrx.com) (perhaps others) have contracted with LibertyCareRx to offer a drug discount card to its residents for use in three different options:

- 1) selected local (or nationwide) pharmacies;
- 2) www.drugstore.com (U.S. mail order program); and
- 3) Liberty Care Canada (Canadian mail order).

According to LibertyCareRx, the discount card which is available for an annual fee of \$15 for individuals and \$26 for families saved Westchester residents 26 percent off drug prices at local pharmacies and between 33 and 50 percent off prescription drugs purchased from Canada.

Nassau County has provided for a free prescription drug discount card from AdvancePCS (www.nassaurx.advancerx.com) that allows users to receive a discount at participating pharmacies or through its mail order program. Their mail order program does not include Canadian pharmacies.

What Are Other States Doing?

Several states, including those below, have opted to provide their residents with information about accessing lower-cost prescription medicine from Canada. All of these sites have disclosure/disclaimer statements.

- ❖ Minnesota
- ❖ Wisconsin
- ❖ New Hampshire
- ❖ Washington

State of Minnesota officials directly visited and inspected pharmacies in Canada to identify which ones it wanted to include on its web site. In 2004, they launched "Minnesota RxConnect" which offers direct links to Canadian pharmacies. (www.MinnesotaRxConnect.com) includes Canadian pharmacies selected by the Minnesota Department of Human Services; their criteria for inclusion included the following:

- Meets the licensing criteria of Canada and provincial laws, and specific operating standards.
- Provides medications approved by the Government of Canada's Therapeutic products Directorate for sale in Canada;
- Excludes medicines for which there is no equivalent approved for sale in the USA
- Excludes medicine that cannot be safely shipped
- Provides medication in a supply not in excess of the amount approved by an individual's U.S. physician, and not to exceed a 3-month supply.
- Uses un-opened manufacturer's packaging when possible.
- Does not fill orders the customer indicates is for a first-time use.
- Provides periodic reports to the Department of Human Services regarding complaints from customers using the State's website.

The pharmacies included on the site are:

- Canada US Pharmacy (www.canadauspharmacy.com)
- CanadaDrugs.com (www.CanadaDrugs.com)
- Granville Pharmacy (www.OnlineCanadianPharmacy.com)
- Total Care Pharmacy (www.crossborderpharmacy.com)

State of Wisconsin officials visited Canadian pharmacies to evaluate them on a number of criteria. The State sponsors a website (www.drugsavings.wi.gov) structured similarly to Minnesota RxConnect. The consumer is also able to search for a drug and list the State approved pharmacies that participate. Consumers who are not Wisconsin residents are welcome to order drugs from the website, however the

prices quoted on the site are guaranteed for Wisconsin residents only and users of the site are free to contact the pharmacies directly to request pricing information.

State of New Hampshire officials also visited Canadian sites. Their website is entitled, Affordable Healthcare for New Hampshire Residents (www.state.nh.us/governor/prescription/prescription.html) and offers a direct link to a Canadian pharmacy, along with information about the State's process for selecting pharmacies.

The New Hampshire Dept. of Health and Human Services has identified CanadaDrugs.com (www.canadadrugs.com) as the Canadian pharmacy that meets certain standards including:

- ✓ An actual pharmacy, not just a mail order company
- ✓ Accreditation by the Internet Mail-Order Accreditation Commission
- ✓ Member in good standing of the North American Pharmacy Accreditation Commission (NAPAC)
- ✓ Meets and exceeds standards set by other pharmaceutical associations such as Canadian International Pharmacy Association (CIPA)

State of Washington's website (<http://www.rx.wa.gov/>) offers its consumers links to Canadian pharmacies and provides suggestions on when their use might be appropriate.

What Are Safety Issues to Consider?

Among the questions asked when exploring the issue of purchasing lower priced drugs from Canada is whether the prescription medications obtained from their pharmacies are safe. The FDA posts information on its website (www.fda.gov) emphasizing its concern with imported drugs.

Many state governments addressed this question by comparing the Canadian pharmaceutical supply and distribution system with that of the U.S. and by making site visits to the physical locations of the website pharmacies.

For example, the Office of Special Advocate for Prescription Drugs of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services focused on safety and efficacy when it examined the feasibility of allowing State employee and retiree beneficiaries to purchase drugs from the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba.

Among its key findings:

- The Canadian regulatory system provides equivalent protection for the health and safety of the public as is provided in Illinois.
- Both the U.S. and Canada have comparable methods of ensuring safety and efficacy.
- The Canadian system for pricing and distribution is less likely to foster drug counterfeiting.
- Both the U.S. and Canada have comparable requirements for the warehousing and storage of pharmaceuticals.
- Educational requirements and professional regulation of pharmacists in the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba are as rigorous as those of Illinois.

Canadian Regulatory Agencies and Professional Associations.

Health Canada's Therapeutic Products Directorate (TPD) is the Canadian federal authority that regulates prescription drugs. It issues a drug identification number (DIN), which is similar to the U.S. national drug code (NDC). The TPD is responsible for evaluating and monitoring the safety, effectiveness, and quality of pharmaceutical drugs.

While voluntary, professional associations such as the IMPAC (Internet and Mail Order Pharmacy Accreditation Commission), NAPAC (North American Pharmacy Accreditation Commission), and CIPA (Canadian International Pharmacy Association) provide a measure of quality assurance to individual Canadian pharmacies. Each province has its own licensing authority which regulates pharmacies and the practice of pharmacy.

How Has the United States Food and Drug Administration Responded?

To date, the FDA's enforcement priorities have not focused on individual consumers. Officials have, however, seized shipments of prescription drugs from Canada. On one occasion, officials stopped a shipment from CanadaRx, which is the main pharmacy for the Canadian Drug Reimportation Program sponsored by the Minnesota Senior Federation. No arrests were made.

The FDA has sent letters to governmental agencies who sponsor programs and websites that facilitate the purchase of Canadian drugs. A sample of organizations which have received these letters follows. The FDA letters are posted on the website at www.fda.gov.

FDA Responses to Organizations Promoting Canadian Pharmacies			
Date 2004	Sponsoring Organization	Program/ Action	FDA Letter Contents
Aug. 20	Mayor of Washington, D.C., Anthony Williams	District of Columbia website has link to Minnesota's RxConnect	Concerns about link. Notes deficiencies with Minnesota's RxConnect selected pharmacies.
Aug. 4	Mayor of Boston, Thomas Menino	Program for city employees and retirees to purchase drugs from Total Care.	Concerns about Total Care Pharmacy of Calgary.
July 22, March 18	Governor of Wisconsin, Jim Doyle	Website and program. Contracts with Canadian pharmacies to serve citizens of Wisconsin	Concerns: about the contracting pharmacies; that the drugs listed have less expensive and safer options domestically; that the State uses a disclaimer
June 3	Governor of Illinois, Rod Blagojevich	Requests approval of demonstration project for the importation of drugs from Canada	Notes it cannot authorize waivers, pilot programs, etc., and references Wisconsin and Minnesota's websites as illegal.
May 24, February 23	Governor of Minnesota, Tim Pawlenty	Sponsors a website that facilitates purchasing drugs from select Canadian pharmacies. Encourages state employee participation by elimination of co-pay.	Found deficiencies in task force report from State inspection. Notes Canadian pharmacies don't meet the standards of Minnesota.
April 5,	Caldwell County (North Carolina) Manager, Bobby White	Program facilitating the purchase of Canadian drugs for county employees and dependents.	All Canadian drugs purchased by county employees and their dependents will be illegal. Raises possibility of tort liability if a citizen suffers an injury as a result.
March 31	Governor of New Hampshire, Craig Benson	State program facilitating the purchase of Canadian drugs from select pharmacy.	States a problem with their inspection process. Finds that accreditation of pharmacy by IMPAC to have no credibility since these are voluntary bodies with no legal standing. Notes that CanadaDrugs.com has no malpractice insurance and patients must sign a statement of liability.

Figure 16: Finding Lower-Cost Prescriptions (Web Version) <http://prescription.hsctc.org>

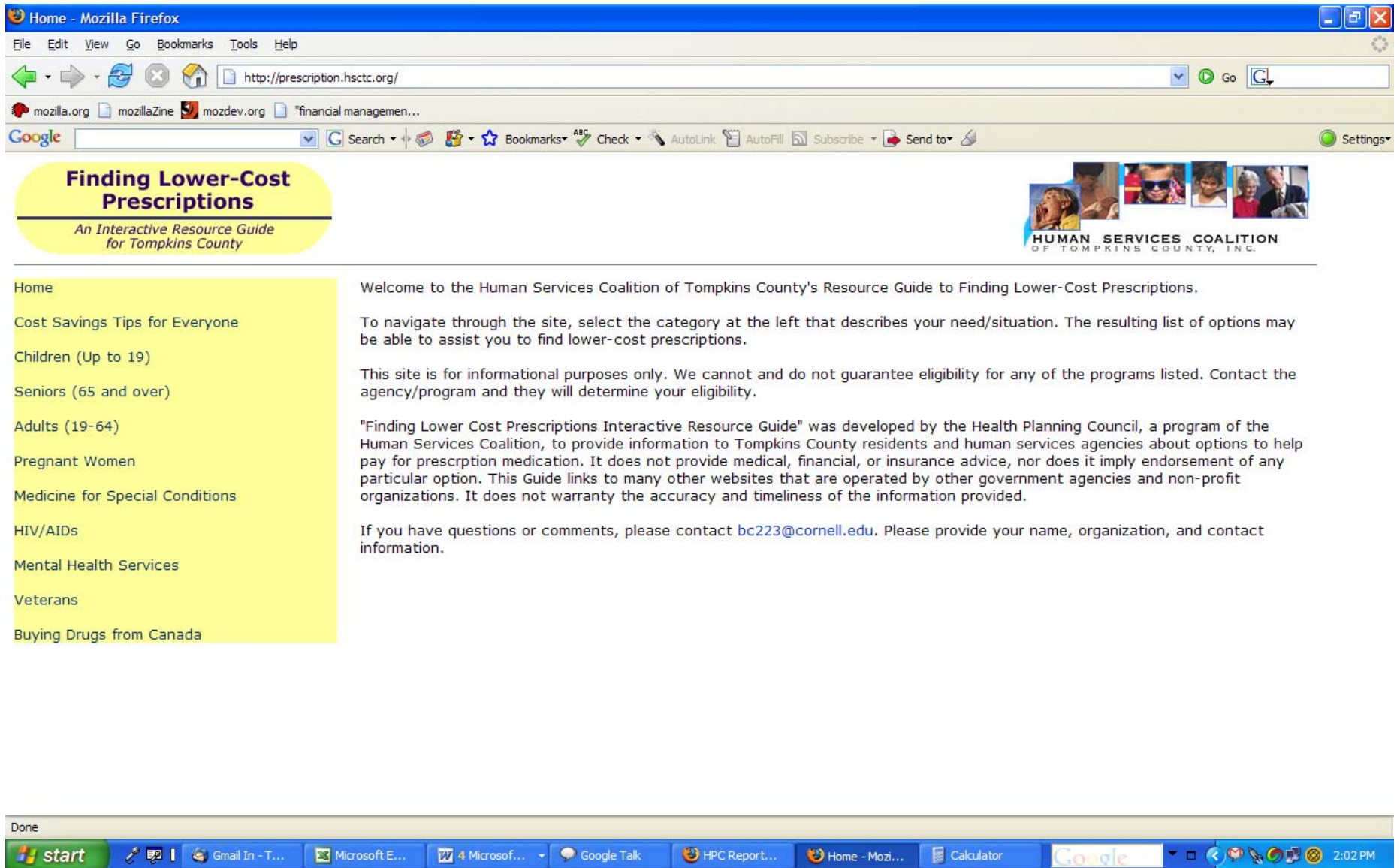


Figure 17: TompkinsRx Discount Program

The prescription discount program, **TompkinsRx**, is available to all Tompkins County residents, regardless of age. The TompkinsRx discount card can bring immediate relief from high drug prices for all uninsured and underinsured residents of the county.

The County is collaborating with CaremarkRx, Inc., one of the nation's leading private pharmacy benefit managers, to provide the TompkinsRx card. **There is no cost to the County or its taxpayers.**

The TompkinsRx card is **free** and requires no enrollment forms. Uninsured or underinsured residents can simply present the TompkinsRx card when purchasing prescription drugs at any pharmacy in the county, for average savings of 20 percent off retail prices. Using the card for mail-order purchases can result in savings averaging 50 percent off retail prices. The card can be used in other counties, as well as nationally, at any of the many pharmacies that have an agreement with CaremarkRx.

People with no prescription insurance coverage will benefit the most from using the card. People who have prescription coverage can still receive discounts on drugs not covered by their plans or another discount program. The discount card program is not insurance.

Medicare recipients can use the TompkinsRx card. They can bring both their Medicare and TompkinsRx cards to their pharmacy and ask which offers them a greater discount on any particular prescription.

The free cards are available at numerous locations, including County offices, town and village halls, medical and health care offices, the Tompkins County Public Library, and all pharmacies in the county.

For more information, Click [here](#) to visit the TompkinsRx site (Note: the site works best using Internet Explorer 5.5 or newer. Other browsers may not work as well.) or call 1-877-321-2652.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is TompkinsRx? TompkinsRx is a prescription discount card that can help save an average of 20% off the price of prescription medicine at all drug stores in Tompkins County (as of 1/18/05)

How does TompkinsRx work? Tompkins County has contracted with one of the nation's leading pharmacy benefit managers, to make the TompkinsRx card available for free to anyone in Tompkins County. Simply present your TompkinsRx card at a participating pharmacy when you fill your prescription. All commonly prescribed prescription drugs, brand name and generic, are covered. Please note that TompkinsRx is not insurance.

What does it cost to enroll in TompkinsRx? The TompkinsRx card is FREE. There is no cost to join.

Do I need to fill out an application to get TompkinsRx? No. There is no need to fill out an application form. If you have the card, you can use it right away.

Who can use the TompkinsRx card? Any resident, regardless of age, income, or existing health coverage, but you cannot use TompkinsRx in conjunction with other cards to get additional discounts on a prescription.

How much will I save by using the TompkinsRx card? Savings on each prescription may vary depending upon the medication and the pharmacy you use. TompkinsRx can save an average of 20% off of the pharmacy's regular retail prices for prescription drugs.

How can I save with mail order? TompkinsRx card holders are automatically eligible for additional

savings through mail service. For more information, call toll-free 1-877-321-2652 or click [here](#) to visit the TompkinsRx website hosted by Caremark Rx.

Can I save money by ordering my brand name prescription medications (such as Lipitor, Topamax) through mail service? Savings can vary by drug and pharmacy, but you can order any medication you are taking on an ongoing basis through mail service. For more information, including a price estimate, call toll-free 1-877-321-2652 or click [here](#) to visit the TompkinsRx website hosted by Caremark Rx.

Where can I get a TompkinsRx card? Cards are available at many public places in Tompkins County such as town and village halls, libraries, health care provider offices, local agencies, and pharmacies.

Does each member of my family need their own card? No, one card is good for the entire family.

Can other members of my household use the TompkinsRx card? Yes, any member of your household can use the same TompkinsRx card.

Can I use the card more than once? Yes. There are no restrictions and no limits on how many times you may use your card.

Which pharmacies accept the TompkinsRx card? The card is accepted at all pharmacies in Tompkins County (as of 1/18/05) and more than 54,000 pharmacies nationwide, including major chains. To find a participating pharmacy, call toll-free 1-877-321-2652, click [here](#) to visit the TompkinsRx website hosted by Caremark Rx, or ask your local pharmacy if they accept the TompkinsRx card.

What if I work in Tompkins County but live somewhere else? You can still use the TompkinsRx card. The card is accepted at more than 54,000 pharmacies nationwide, including major chains. To find a participating pharmacy, call toll-free 1-877-321-2652, click [here](#) to visit the TompkinsRx website hosted by Caremark Rx, or ask your local pharmacy if they accept the TompkinsRx card.

Where do I go if I have questions about TompkinsRx? Call toll-free 1-877-321-2652, click [here](#) to visit the TompkinsRx website hosted by Caremark Rx, or ask your local pharmacy if they accept the TompkinsRx card.

How does the TompkinsRx card differ from other prescription discount cards? You can get the card for free without completing any paperwork. The card is accepted at all local pharmacies (as of 1/18/05) and at over 54,000 pharmacies nationwide.

TOMPKINSRX AND EXISTING INSURANCE

Can I use the TompkinsRx card with my current prescription insurance benefit to reduce my costs? Your card cannot be used in conjunction with another card. Your regular prescription insurance typically provides better coverage, but you can still use the TompkinsRx card on drugs that are not covered under your plan.

Can I use my TompkinsRx card for expenses before I meet the deductible on my health insurance plan? You may be able to use TompkinsRx to reduce your out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs until you meet your deductible. Call your insurance plan for information.

TOMPKINSRX AND PEOPLE WHO ARE UNINSURED

Can I use TompkinsRx if I don't have any insurance? Yes. If you don't have insurance for prescription medicine, TompkinsRx can help you save money on your prescription drugs at all local pharmacies (as of 1/18/05) or through mail service.

Uninsured adults may qualify for one of New York State's health insurance programs that include prescription drug coverage. For information on Family Health Plus, call 1-800-231-0744. Working uninsured adults may be eligible to enroll in Healthy New York. Call 1-866-HEALTHY NY (1-866-432-5849).

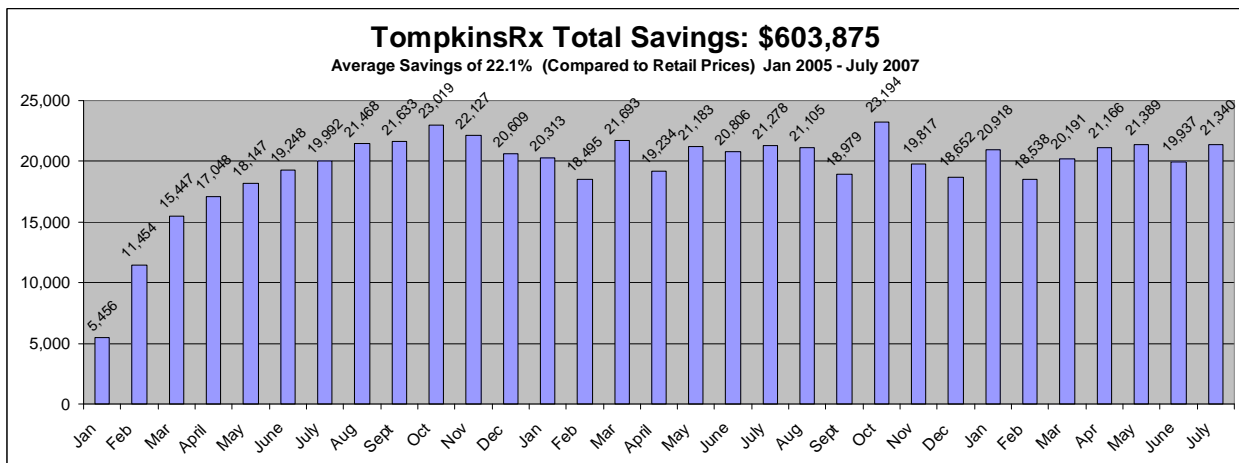
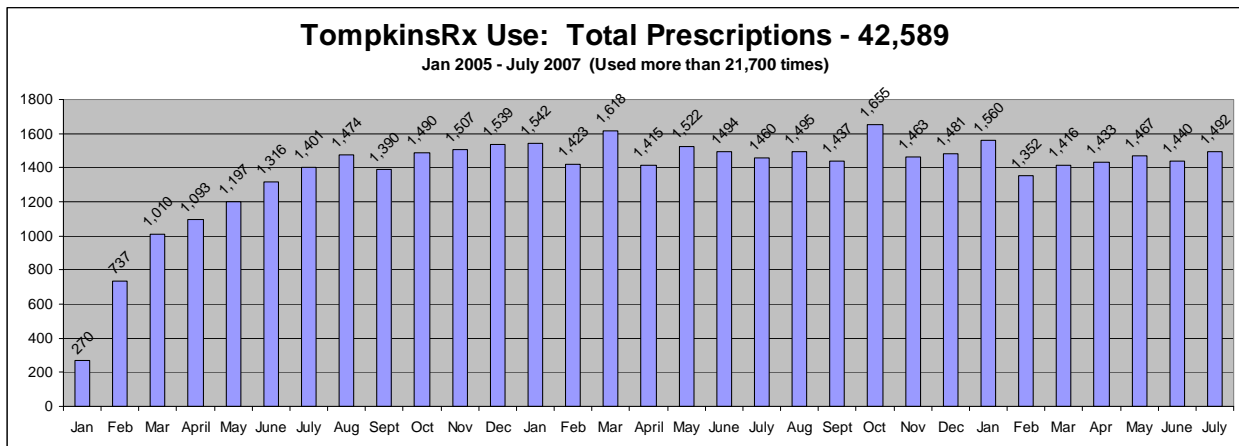
Uninsured children under age 19 are eligible for Child Health Plus; it is FREE at lower income levels with a sliding monthly premium level after this. Call 1-800 – 231-0744.

TOMPKINSRX AND PEOPLE 65 AND OLDER

Can I use TompkinsRx if I am 65+? Yes. However, people 65+ years of age without any prescription coverage may be eligible for New York State's prescription assistance program, EPIC.

What if I am 65 or over and have EPIC (Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage)? You can still get the TompkinsRx card if you have EPIC. However, TompkinsRx is not prescription drug insurance so you will typically save more with EPIC. You cannot use the TompkinsRx card in conjunction with your EPIC card to reduce your co-payment or satisfy your deductible. Call EPIC at 1-800-332-3742 for more information.

Can I have the TompkinsRx card if I have a Medicare Approved Drug Discount Card (MADDC)? You can still get the TompkinsRx card if you already have one of the Medicare Approved Drug Discount Cards, however you cannot use both for the same prescription. You can check with your pharmacy to see which card offers you the best price on any particular prescription.





United Way of Tompkins County
313 North Aurora Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 272.6286 Telephone
(607) 272.2736 Fax
www.uwtc.org