



HEALTH CARE CHOICES

The High Cost of Prescription Drugs

(NAPS)—According to a recent study released by the White House, U.S. citizens without prescription drug coverage pay at least 15 percent more for their medications than what insurers pay. This is because the insurance companies get large discounts for buying in “bulk.”

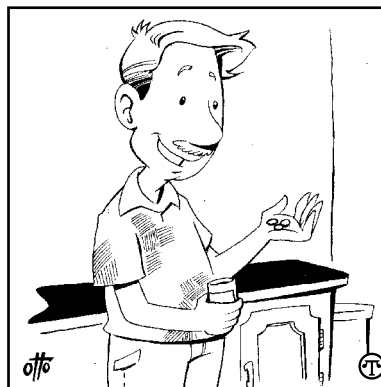
In a study done by Families USA, a group that advocates universal healthcare coverage, the average cost per prescription for seniors has risen 48.4 percent in the past 8 years, from \$28.50 in 1992 to \$42.30 now. In addition, the average cost is expected to increase to a whopping \$72.94 by the year 2010.

According to this same report, seniors in 1992 consumed about 20 prescriptions a year. Today, seniors are taking up to 29 different prescriptions each year with a projected increase to 39 by 2010. Although it's true that there are more effective medications available today, these more advanced drugs equate to a higher price tag.

The fact is, one in four Americans do not have health insurance coverage for prescription drugs; of these, one-third are seniors. Although seniors account for only 13 percent of the total U.S. population, they are paying for 42 percent of prescription drug expenses.

As a result, many patients resort to extreme measures in order to stretch their shrinking healthcare dollar. Some try splitting pills to make prescriptions last longer. Others deplete their savings or even go without their medications at the expense of buying basic necessities.

So what's the answer for 39 million Medicare beneficiaries and additional millions of other Americans who lack prescription drug coverage? Skyrocketing drug prices mean more hard times for those who pay cash for their medications. As this problem reaches epidemic proportions, the question still remains about how to stop the bleeding.



A new program is helping reduce the cost of brand name and generic medications.

One program that can help is called the MatureRx program, a prescription drug savings program that can save members up to 65 percent on preferred brand name medications and even more on generics. The program also offers a mail service option which can result in greater savings.

A national, random survey was done to compare retail drug prices to MatureRx prices for six different medications. The survey revealed that average retail price for a one-month supply of Claritin 10mg (allergy), Prevacid 15mg (ulcer), Lipitor 10mg (high cholesterol), Remeron 30mg (antidepressant), Novolin insulin 10ml vial (diabetes) and Dynabac 250mg (antibiotic) is \$411.35. These same medications on the MatureRx program cost only \$319. This is a savings of \$92.35 each month, or \$1,108.20 a year.

Members can use their MatureRx prescription card at over 40,000 participating pharmacies to save on medications for common health conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, estrogen replacement, depression, diabetes, ulcers, antibiotics, asthma, allergies and more.

Enrollment is FREE. For more information about the program, call 1-800-511-1314 or enroll online at www.MatureRx.com.