

Are Drug Costs Killing You?

Even with health insurance, prescription deductibles and co-pays may leave needed drugs uncomfortably expensive or even unaffordable. Here are possible solutions:

1. If you meet certain criteria for income and total cost of needed medications you may qualify to have free medicines sent to your doctor's office for you under the **drug manufacturer's "COMPASSIONATE NEED" program.**
 - a. These are programs all brand name drug companies have so they can justify high drug prices to Congress by claiming that they provide free drugs to patients who really can't afford them.
 - b. They generally do what you'd expect for programs with those goals, promoting to the world how compassionate they are but then making it hard to qualify.
 - c. If you think you can prove that you have a low income and high medical costs, go on line, search for the name of the drug and "Compassionate use," and see what you can do. If you qualify let us know and we can send a prescription to the program for which you qualify.

The following sources will generally NOT be covered by health insurance drug plans but may save money on drugs for which your insurance has a high copal

2. www.GoodRx.com is a website that offers discount coupons for most prescription drugs both brand name and generic, that have FDA approval for sale in the US. Enter the drug name and your zip code and coupons pop up for all participating pharmacies in your area. These are cash or credit card prices that don't use your health insurance. They give you a share of the discount your pharmacy benefits plan would get and keep for itself if you filled the prescription through your health insurance. **GoodRx saved some of our patients more than 90%** their cost for the same drugs if bought through their health insurance prescription benefit!. **There are other websites that offer the same or similar services. Do an internet search for "Prescription drug discounts." Pharmacychecker has links to a different US discounter but similar to GoodRx.**
3. You are allowed to have prescriptions for your individual use filled at approved pharmacies outside the US and sent to you by mail. With the name and strength of your drug, **Pharmacy Checker <www.pharmacychecker.com>** will list prices and links to participating pharmacies most in Canada or India and shipping from different international sources. Many (but not all) list the country of origin and some also name the manufacturer and if brand or generic. Some will tell you if you ask. Different countries and different manufacturers may have different standards for safety. If you want me to review your options that will need a separate office or telemed visit. Any of the above information you can collect ahead of time will help. For telemed, email any info you want me to review to aasj@aasj.com with your name & date of birth to link to your record.
4. Www.costplusdrugs.com is a new kid on the block offering very low prices for many US-licensed generics.

Good luck.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Coifman, M. D. and the staff of AASJ