

## Helping all New Yorkers afford medicines they need

Written by MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG  
Friday, 03 June 2011 20:33

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OVER the past nine years, our Administration has worked hard to increase the number of New Yorkers with health insurance.

As a result, we've enrolled more than three million New Yorkers in health insurance programs.

But there are still about 1.2 million people in our city without health insurance — and others that have insurance, but no coverage for prescription drugs.

That number is far too high, and we are constantly looking for ways to lower it and connect more New Yorkers to the affordable health care and medicine they need and deserve.

Last week, we brought uninsured and under-insured residents a dose of good news by launching the city's first prescription drug card: the Big Apple Rx card.

This idea has long been championed by City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, and when I was on the campaign trail in 2009, I promised to work with her to make it happen.

Fulfilling that promise should relieve some of the financial strain on families who are struggling to pay bills.

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Prescription medications are not something anyone should have to cut out of the household budget when money gets tight, and the discounts provided by the Big Apple Rx card will help more New Yorkers avoid that terrible choice.

It will provide for an average savings of 53% on generic prescription medications and 15 percent on name brands, and is accepted by more than 2,000 pharmacies throughout the five boroughs.

The Big Apple Rx card is absolutely free and available to anyone living, working or visiting New York City — regardless of age, income, citizenship or health insurance status.

There are no charges associated with applying for the card or using it.

It's good for all prescription medications.

And there's no limit on the number of prescriptions you can fill.

Big Apple Rx card users will also be able to save on certain over-the-counter products for which they have a doctor's prescription, such as glucose meters and strips to help manage diabetes and smoking-cessation aids.

Although the Big Apple Rx card cannot be combined with any discount you currently receive through your health insurance, if there are certain medications or brands of medication that your insurance company doesn't cover, you'll be able to use the card to buy those medications at a discounted rate.

Considering all of these great benefits, we expect the Big Apple Rx card to become one of the most widely distributed prescription drug discount cards in the nation.

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To find out more about the Big Apple Rx card, and where it can be used, simply call 311.

Or, instantly download and print your own card at [www.BigAppleRx.com](http://www.BigAppleRx.com)

If you don't have access to a printer, just write down the card number.

That number and your doctor's prescription are all that you need to present to the pharmacist to receive the special discount.

Big Apple Rx Cards also can be picked up at many neighborhood businesses, community organizations, city agencies and City Council member offices.