

Pharmaceutical Company Patient Assistance Programs

What are They?

The pharmaceutical industry has a long tradition of providing prescription medicines free of charge to patients who might not otherwise have access to necessary medicines. Generally, a patient assistance program provides prescription medicines to patients who do not have prescription drug coverage or who are underinsured through either private and/or government health plans.

Are there any Special Qualifications to Enter a Patient Assistance Program?

The patient assistance programs listed at www.helpingpatients.org are run by the individual companies sponsoring the program. Each company determines the eligibility criteria for its program. Eligibility criteria and the application processes vary. Basic eligibility criteria generally involve income requirements, family size, and status of insurance coverage for prescription drugs.

How do I Know I Meet the Criteria?

Doctors and patients should go to www.helpingpatients.org to determine eligibility. Physicians and/or patients must contact each company directly for more information on eligibility and to receive an application form for the program.

Where do I get more Information? Where can I find out Which Drugs are Covered in a Patient Assistance Program?

Products that are included in each company's program are listed on www.helpingpatients.org. To be sure a product is covered by a program, the patient or physician should contact the company directly. If a particular medicine is not listed in PhRMA's directory, the drug may not be available under this program or may not be manufactured by a company belonging to PhRMA. PhRMA does not have access to information about patient assistance programs offered by non-member companies.

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For more information on non-member programs, contact the following websites:

www.benefitscheckuprx.org, www.rxassist.com, www.rxhope.com, www.medicare.gov.

How do People find more Information About these Programs?

To make it easier for physicians and patients to find the right program, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America has introduced, www.helpingpatients.org. This website lists more than 1,400 medicines from more than 140 company-sponsored programs and more than 185 government and private programs. PhRMA also publishes a directory that lists company-sponsored programs. For copies of the directory, call 1-800-762-4636 or go to www.helpingpatients.org.

How many People are Helped by these Programs?

In 2002, companies helped an estimated 5.4 million patients fill more than 14 million prescriptions.

The estimated wholesale value of these prescriptions was \$2.3 billion.

Many physicians associated with low-income clinics rely on these programs. As one Iowa physician commented: "When all the government programs fail me, the pharmaceutical industry comes through for me."

Is this the Answer to the Access Problem?

While these programs of America's pharmaceutical companies are indispensable for the neediest patients, they cannot be expected to solve the larger national problem of access to medical care, including prescription drugs. The pharmaceutical industry will continue to work cooperatively with those seeking public and private sector solutions to these larger problems.