



Oneida County Drug Discount Program Press Conference: Q & A

When will this program be available?

The Oneida County Drug Discount Program will be available beginning July 1, 2005.

Who is eligible to participate in this program?

This program has been designed to provide drug discounts for all residents of Oneida County.

Is it possible to participate in this program if you are not a resident of Oneida County? What if you live in another county, but work in Oneida County?

Yes. There is no application or enrollment form and proof of residency is not required, so anyone can use the card and participate in the program.

How do individuals participate in the program?

Those interested in participating simply need to get a drug discount card that they present to a participating pharmacy when filling a prescription.

How do residents get the card?

Oneida County will be distributing cards countywide at various locations including local pharmacies, medical offices, and human service agencies. Residents can order the card and learn where else to obtain the card by calling the county at 315-798-5456 or visiting the County Web site at <http://www.ocgov.net>. They can also call or go to the Website to find a participating pharmacy.

What kind of discounts does the program provide?

Discounts will vary depending on the type of prescription medication purchased and retail pricing at specific pharmacies on a specific days. In Oneida County, program participants can expect to receive discounts of up to 38% off the retail price for generic drugs such as Hydrochlorothiazide (38%), Gabapentin (19%), and Furosemide (17%) and up to 21% off the retail price for brand name drugs, such as Flomax (21%), Prevacid (15%), and Plavix (13%). Those percentage discounts are based upon a comparison of cash discount card prices and prices obtained at retail pharmacies in Oneida County in April and June of 2005. Discounts will be calculated and applied automatically at the point-of-sale.

What is the target population for this program? Who will it benefit the most?

The discount card is meant for Oneida County residents who are uninsured or underinsured – people with no prescription drug coverage or limited coverage. Many residents have lost their jobs recently with the downturn in the local economy and are no longer eligible for employer-provided health insurance. Others are working, but have inadequate insurance or no insurance. These are the people who will benefit the most from this program. We want to stress that the drug discount card is NOT insurance. Users must pay 100% of the cost of drugs. The card works for pharmacy prescriptions only, not for drugs dispensed at hospitals. The card does not provide any discount for doctor visits or other types of medical care.

Everyone is eligible to use the card, but it is not intended for people with Medicare or Medicaid benefits or people who have full health and prescription drug insurance. The new drug discount card we are announcing today is not part of any of those government or employer-provided programs or part of any insurance plan.

What pharmacies are participating?

Currently, there are 46 Oneida County pharmacies participating in the Drug Discount Program and others are likely to join. Participating pharmacies include retail chains such as CVS, Eckerd, Rite Aid, Walgreen's, and Wal-Mart, as well as local stores such as Kinney Drugs in Camden, Garro Drug Store in Utica, and Vernon Pharmacy in Vernon. Some of the participating pharmacies also have locations outside of Oneida County where discounts will be honored. A complete list of participating pharmacies in Oneida County can be found on the county Web site at <http://www.ocgov.net>

Are pharmacists and doctors aware of this program?

Yes, we are reaching out to pharmacists, doctors, local hospitals and clinics. They will also distribute the card.

Does the program provide discounts on ALL medications? What drugs are NOT part of this program?

This program provides discounts on all prescription medications provided the individual has a valid prescription from a doctor or another authorized prescriber. The program does not provide discounts on any over-the-counter medications like Claritin, Prilosec, or Advil, or other types of merchandise available at the pharmacy. The discount card is not insurance and is not part of an insurance plan. It's like a coupon without an expiration date.

What about mail order? Is there a mail order option available?

This drug discount program is community based and is designed to provide participants with face-to-face access to their local pharmacist. For this reason, mail order is not part of this program.

Run through an example of how this works from beginning to end. Say, I'm John Doe and I'm underinsured? What do I do?

Obtain a prescription and the drug discount card: John visits his health care provider at the local community clinic or some other location of his choosing. John will need to pay any fees associated with this visit. His health care provider determines that John needs a prescription medication and gives John a prescription. John gets a discount card from his doctor during his visit, or from a participating pharmacy or one of the other locations where cards will be distributed. John can call the County at 315-798-5456 or he can visit the County Web site at <http://www.oc.gov> to find a list of locations where he can go to get his drug discount card.

Present the drug discount card at a pharmacy. John takes his prescription and his drug discount card to a participating pharmacy, such as Prescription Center Pharmacy on Black River Boulevard street in Rome. Using information on the card, the pharmacist accesses MedImpact's computer system to determine the discounted drug price and to perform a standard drug utilization review. The drug utilization review is an important step that helps ensure the newly prescribed medication will not interact adversely with any other medication in the individual's drug history.

Pay the discounted price and receive the medication. The pharmacist then prepares the prescription and gives John the discounted price. John pays the discounted price and receives his prescription. That's it. The card works just like a coupon that never expires.

How does this compare to drug discount legislation that Congress and states are considering? Is the County going to do anything else to improve access to medical care and medications?

Federal and state governments may indeed offer drug discount or drug benefit programs sometime in the future. But this drug discount program is a good first step by the county executive and shows a commitment to helping residents afford needed medications today. The County welcomes legislation when and if it comes, but we are not waiting for that, we are taking action now. In addition to this drug discount card, a major thrust of the county is a pro-active health and fitness program, which our health department can address.

How is this program being funded?

MedImpact, a pharmacy benefit management company, receives a small administration fee for administering the program. There is no cost to participants or to the County. The administration fee comes from agreements with pharmacies.

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