Senator Scott T. Rupp

MISSOURI SENATE

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Capitol Building, Room 426
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Contact: Bev Cain
(866) 271-2844

MoRx Price Compare Offers Additional Savings on Prescription Drugs

JEFFERSON CITY — The high cost of health care is on the minds of many Missourians, and state officials are responding with yet another way for residents to save on prescription drugs. Missouri Rx (MoRx) has introduced a new system to offer Missourians more information on the prices of prescription drugs in their area. MoRx Price Compare is a new Web site that allows users to log on and find the lowest prices for their prescriptions in local pharmacies. This new tool is another smart use of technology empowering Missourians with more information and supplementing the valuable MoRx program.

On the Price Compare Web site, which is located at www.morxcompare.mo.gov, searchers supply their medication, dosage and hometown, ZIP code or county. The Web site then conducts a search and provides a list of local pharmacies and their drug prices. Prices are determined by the lowest net charge paid by Medicaid recipients for a prescription, based on the quantity and strength of a particular drug or product. These prices are the retail prices reported by pharmacies and do not include insurance or discounts from supplementary health-care plans.

The Web site, which is managed by the Missouri Department of Social Services, is easy to navigate and offers intuitive search tools. It is another feature of the MoRx program, and it is available for all Missourians to use. Price Compare exemplifies the efforts of Missouri lawmakers and state officials to utilize technology to lower costs, improve transparency and expand access to health care.

MoRx is a state-sponsored supplement to the federal government's prescription drug plan, Medicare Part D. Part D provides assistance to purchasing drugs; however, it has a benefit gap for most enrollees. The gap begins after drug costs reach $2,250 and ends when costs exceed $5,100 in a year. MoRx helps to bridge that gap by providing assistance to seniors and disabled citizens in need.

MoRx pays for 50 percent of out-of-pocket costs that are not currently paid by the Medicare Part D program, excluding the monthly premium, and 50 percent of seniors' deductibles. Further, the program pays 50 percent of the Medicare Part D coverage gap, 50 percent of the co-pay before the gap in coverage and 50 percent of co-pays in catastrophic coverage.

In addition to these benefits, eligibility and membership requirements are easy to understand. MoRx is open to Missourians enrolled in Medicare Part D who are over 65 with an annual income of $19,600 or less for individuals, or $26,400 or less for married couples. MoRx works with all Medicare Part D plans, and there are no application deadlines or fees of any kind. Once enrolled, there is no need to re-apply.

The program is already providing assistance for more than 160,000 Missourians. A simple one-page application is all that is required to apply, and benefits for new enrollees should begin the month following application approval. To apply or learn more about MoRx, call toll free (800) 375-1406 or visit www.morx.mo.gov. Again, the Web site for MoRx Price Compare is www.morxcompare.mo.gov.

I encourage everyone purchasing prescription drugs to visit the Price Compare Web site. Additionally, anyone who might qualify for MoRx should call or go online to verify their eligibility. These programs are valuable resources in the fight to lower the cost of health care.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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