

# Spending on prescription meds up about 5 percent in 2015

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(HealthDay)—Spending on prescription medications for insured

Americans increased about 5 percent in 2015, with the increase half of that seen in 2014, the *Associated Press* reported.

According to Express Scripts Holding Co., the largest U.S. prescription benefit manager, there was a 16.2 percent increase in the average price of brand-name drugs already on the market in 2015, with an increase of 98.2 percent since 2011. Price-increases exceeding 20 percent were reported for one-third of brand-name prescription drugs in 2015. Express Scripts forecasts that there will be a 6 to 8 percent increase in drug spending per year from 2016 to 2018.

The drug category with the most spending was for specialty medicines, specifically those medications for inflammatory conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis. Specialty [drug spending](#) increased 17.8 percent, including an average price increase of 11 percent and a 6.8 percent increase in the number of prescriptions filled for those drugs. Including factors such as patient copayments and manufacturer rebates, U.S. medicine spending increased 5.2 percent in 2015, down from 10.1 percent in 2014.

"Spending increases in the second year of insurance exchange plans averaged 13.6 percent, much higher than for commercial insurance and Medicare and Medicaid prescription plans handled by Express Scripts," according to the *Associated Press*. "That was mainly driven by an 8.6 percent increase in medicine use."

**More information:** [More Information](#)

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