

A free online tool can help prostate cancer patients save on out-of-pocket drug costs

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A free online tool could potentially save some prostate cancer patients

more than \$9,000 in out-of-pocket drug costs, a new study finds.

For patients enrolled in Medicare Part D prescription drug plans, out-of-pocket costs can vary significantly. But by using an online Medicare plan finder tool, patients can compare pricing among all Part D drug plans offered in their area and select the most affordable plan.

Researchers from the University of Michigan Health Rogel Cancer Center found that the Medicare Part D Plan Finder can identify significant savings for patients taking abiraterone or enzalutamide, two common [prescription drugs](#) for [advanced prostate cancer](#).

"Patients with Medicare Part D have dozens of different drug plans available to choose from, but most patients unfortunately are not aware of this. If they compare estimated costs, they could save thousands of dollars each year in drug costs. This could make a huge impact for patients with [limited resources](#)," said lead study author Benjamin Pockros, M.D., M.B.A., a urology resident at Michigan Medicine.

The researchers looked at out-of-pocket costs for abiraterone and enzalutamide, using the Medicare Part D Plan Finder to compare within 12 different regions across the country that have prominent prostate cancer programs.

Out-of-pocket costs for abiraterone prescriptions ranged from \$1,379 to \$13,274 among all Part D plans. The median potential cost savings among all 12 cities was \$9,321.

For enzalutamide, out-of-pocket cost ranged from \$9,854 to \$13,061. The median potential cost savings among all 12 cities was \$1,839. The study is published in *Urology Practice*.

"We know cancer can take a devastating physical, emotional and

financial toll on patients. For those enrolled in Medicare Part D, this plan finder is free and easy to use, and hopefully one small step in improving [cancer care](#) in our country," Pockros said.

The plan finder is [available online](#). Patients enter their ZIP code and prescription drugs; the finder displays estimated annual out-of-pocket costs for local retail and mail order pharmacies.

Medicare offers an annual open enrollment period from Oct. 15–Dec. 7, during which people can switch plans. More than 49 million Americans are enrolled in Medicare Part D, and some patients can choose from up to 50 different plans. Despite significant cost differences, fewer than 30% of patients report comparing drug plan pricing.

The study authors urge providers to speak to patients about using the plan finder. They are now leading a project to help make cancer patients more aware of the Medicare Part D Plan Finder to help minimize out-of-pocket drug costs.

More information: Benjamin Pockros et al, Out-of-Pocket Costs for Prostate Cancer Medications Substantially Vary by Medicare Part D Plan: An Online Tool Presents an Opportunity to Mitigate Financial Toxicity, *Urology Practice* (2023). [DOI: 10.1097/UPJ.0000000000000421](#)

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