



Online tools can help to lower costs for urologic medications, says experts

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Patient Guide for Purchasing Affordable Prescription Medications

- 1.** Insured by Medicare? Select the most affordable Part D plan every October 15-December 7 by searching:
www.Medicare.gov/plan-compare
- 2.** Do you need to pick it up this week? Find the most affordable local pharmacy on:



RX Pricing Handout. Credit: Wolters Kluwer Patient handout for purchasing affordable prescription medications. *Urology Practice* (2024). DOI: 10.1097/UPJ.0000000000000544

Available online tools can help to lower out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for patients with common urologic conditions, [reports](#) a study in the May issue of *Urology Practice*,.

"As clinicians, we find that many patients need help in understanding that prescriptions can often be purchased outside of insurance for significantly lower cost and in navigating the complex options for purchasing prescription drugs," comments senior author Ruchika Talwar, MD, of Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville.

"Urologists are not trained on how to counsel patients on this important aspect of care. Our analysis provides practical information on [online tools](#) to lower [prescription costs](#), including finding the best option for each patient's situation."

Online tools for reducing prescription costs: Options and tradeoffs

Recent reports have highlighted ["financial toxicity"](#) due to high prescription drug costs among patients with urologic conditions such as urinary incontinence, kidney stones, and prostate cancer. For US urologists, it can be difficult to estimate out-of-pocket costs because of varying insurance coverage, local [pharmacy](#) options, and complex prescription pricing schemes.

Toward providing urologists and their patients with information on options for reducing drug costs, Dr. Talwar and colleagues identify and analyze four online resources "designed to direct patients toward more affordable prescription medication options":

- Medicare Part D—Most Medicaid beneficiaries have access to a wide range of Part D drug plans providing coverage for prescription medications. An online tool called the Medicare Part D Plan Finder enables patients to compare estimated out-of-pocket plans between plans. (www.medicare.gov/plan-compare)
- Mark Cuban CostPlus Drug Company (MCCPDC)—MCCPDC is an online pharmacy offering transparent pricing, with a 15% markup over the manufacturing cost for each medication plus small service and shipping fees. A [recent study in Urology Practice](#) found that MCCPDC may reduce costs for common urologic drugs
- Amazon Pharmacy—Amazon Pharmacy offers affordable prescription drugs with home delivery. Patients who purchase a Prime membership can add a unique benefit called RxPass, which lets them refill common generic prescriptions at no additional cost.
- GoodRx—Good Rx is a free online service that allows patients to compare out-of-pocket costs for medications at local pharmacies, including costs with or without insurance coverage. It includes a "Provider Mode" enabling prescribers to compare prices for competing medications.

Dr. Talwar and colleagues note some tradeoffs in the features and financial savings offered by the four tools, with the best option depending on the individual patient's situation. Medicare beneficiaries should be aware that Part D plans vary in terms of cost-sharing requirements, and should be compared before each yearly Open Enrollment period. For patients who urgently need to fill a prescription (such as for antibiotics or pain relievers), GoodRx may be the best option to compare costs at local pharmacies.

Patients with recurrent prescriptions for [chronic conditions](#) or certain costly medications should check MCCPDC or Amazon Pharmacy to

compare prescription refill pricing. While MCCPDC does not accept insurance, its prices are often favorable when total out-of-pocket costs are considered.

The article includes a one-page guide to affordable prescription medications. While the analysis focuses on medications for urologic conditions, the information provided will be relevant to other areas of medical practice as well. "At a time when patients are increasingly concerned about [prescription drugs](#), this information will provide a useful starting point for making essential medications as affordable as possible," Dr. Talwar comments.

More information: Benjamin Pockros et al, Online Tools to Decrease Out-of-Pocket Prescription Costs for Patients: A Practical Guide for Urologists, *Urology Practice* (2024). [DOI: 10.1097/UPJ.0000000000000544](#)

Provided by Wolters Kluwer Health

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