

The Active Consumer

Programs Make Prescription Drugs Available Free

(NAPSA)—It has often been said that the best things in life are free—and that expression can even be applied to something that's usually associated with a high price tag: prescription drugs.

As the cost of prescription medications continues to increase, often making them unaffordable for people without insurance, the drug manufacturers themselves are helping get their products to the people who need them—practically free of charge.

Many drug manufacturers sponsor what are called “patient assistance programs.” These programs are intended to help those who otherwise can't afford prescription drugs—including people who are unemployed or lack health insurance, and seniors who don't have prescription drug coverage under Medicare—obtain the medications they need. In 2001 alone, patient assistance programs helped 3.1 million Americans fill more than 10 million prescriptions—with an estimated value of \$1.5 billion.

Most people, however, including qualified doctors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals—are not even aware that these programs even exist. Fortunately, there's now a volunteer organization dedicated to pointing people in need in the right direction.

The Free Medicine Program cuts through the red tape of the application process by helping



A popular program helps people obtain the prescription drugs they need, free of charge.

people enroll in patient assistance programs. It also helps simplify the rules, guidelines and procedures, and helps expedite the submission process. Once patients are approved, the free medication is generally sent in just two to three weeks.

Because of the organization's groundbreaking work in this area, physicians nationwide are currently distributing Free Medicine Program brochures to their patients. Even Social Security offices have brochures available for their constituents.

For more information or to apply, call (646) 205-8000 or visit www.FreeMedicineProgram.com.