

THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Hon. Gifford Miller
Speaker



A STAFF REPORT TO

THE COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND
INVESTIGATIONS

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FEBRUARY 2004

Prescription Drug Prices: All Over the Map



Various prices obtained for
the **same drug** in each borough.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While much attention has been given to Americans flocking to Canada for low-cost prescription drugs, New Yorkers could be saving more than 40% on their prescription drug purchases just by traveling to a different borough. A New York City Council Investigation Division (CID) investigation finds that a senior citizen with arthritis, high cholesterol, hypertension and gastric acid disorders could save more than \$2,600 per year just by shopping around within New York City.ⁱ Prices for some prescription drugs varied not only between boroughs, but also within them — with a spread ranging from \$30 to \$80 for a single prescription. CID also found that more than 70% of the pharmacies surveyed did not comply with the New York State (NYS) law requiring that they make their prescription drug retail prices available to consumers upon request.

State law requires that pharmacies maintain a list of their prices for the 150 most commonly prescribed drugs.ⁱⁱ It also mandates that they update this Drug Retail Price List at least weekly, distribute the list to consumers upon request, and post a sign notifying consumers of the availability of the list.ⁱⁱⁱ This sign is required to be posted in the pharmacy where prescriptions are accepted or dispensed, or in the pharmacy's waiting area.^{iv}

The problem of prescription drug price disparities is not new, but the means to address it effectively are. The Internet has made sharing and disseminating information cheaper, faster and easier than ever before; using it to maintain and display online a database of retail drug prices at pharmacies citywide will

ⁱ Based on the \$2,650.32 difference between the highest and lowest prices found for a year's supply of monthly prescriptions for Celebrex (for arthritis), Lipitor (for cholesterol), Norvasc (for hypertension) and Prevacid (for gastric acid disorders) — \$3,529.08 and \$6,179.40, respectively.

ⁱⁱ NYS Consolidated Laws, Article 137; Pharmacy §6826. The NYS Board of Pharmacy prepares and distributes this list of 150 medications to every pharmacy annually.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*

^{iv} *Ibid.*

enable the City to make use of and strengthen the State's laws in an innovative way. Such an approach would give consumers unprecedented opportunities to comparison-shop online for their medications, while the public information would exert pressure on pharmacies to keep prices low for everyone.

CID conducted site visits and a telephone survey of 90 New York City pharmacies^v to evaluate compliance with this law and determine whether and how much prices for five commonly prescribed drugs^{vi} varied citywide.

Site Visits

CID discovered the following:

- Only 28% percent of the pharmacies had hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price List available upon request.
- Less than half (46%) of the pharmacies had a sign posted to notify consumers of the availability of the Drug Retail Price List.
- Only 36% of pharmacies in Staten Island produced hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price List upon request, yet this was the highest rate of compliance among the five boroughs. The others rated as follows: the Bronx (33%), Brooklyn (22%), Manhattan (27%) and Queens (25%).
- Staten Island pharmacies had the highest rate of compliance with the signage requirement, with 64% posting the appropriate sign to notify consumers of the availability of the Drug Retail Price list. That compared to the Bronx (47%), Brooklyn (44%), Manhattan (30%) and Queens (63%).

Telephone Survey

CID found the following:

- Sixty-seven (74%) pharmacies gave price quotes to investigators over the phone.

^v The same list of pharmacies was used for both the site visits and the telephone survey.

^{vi} The prescription drugs are Lipitor, Allegra, Norvasc, Prevacid and Celebrex.

- Twenty-three (26%) pharmacies refused to disclose a price over the phone.
- Major differences in individual drug prices were noted even within the same borough. The widest variation found was the \$78.05 difference in prices for Prevacid in Manhattan — the highest cash price obtained for a month’s supply of Prevacid was \$208.00, while the lowest cash price was \$129.95. Other examples:
 - The Bronx: the highest cash price obtained for a month’s supply of Celebrex was \$102.00, while the lowest was \$60.19 — resulting in a \$41.81 difference.
 - Brooklyn: the highest cash price obtained for a month’s supply of Prevacid was \$173.99, while the lowest cash price obtained was \$130.00 — a \$43.99 difference.

A summary of CID’s findings is presented in Table I below.

Table I – Lowest/Highest Individual Drug Prices Per Borough

Borough	High/Low	Lipitor	Allegra	Norvasc	Prevacid	Celebrex
Bronx	Highest	\$85.99	\$85.99	\$56.59	\$168.99	\$102.00
	Lowest	\$74.99	\$79.00	\$48.00	\$145.99	\$60.19
	% Difference	14.7%	8.9%	17.9%	15.8%	69.5%
	Average	\$80.49	\$82.50	\$52.30	\$157.49	\$81.10
Brooklyn	Highest	\$86.56	\$86.99	\$56.99	\$173.99	\$102.87
	Lowest	\$70.00	\$71.00	\$46.00	\$130.00	\$85.00
	% Difference	23.7%	22.5%	23.9%	33.8%	21.0%
	Average	\$78.28	\$78.99	\$51.50	\$151.99	\$93.94
Manhattan	Highest	\$109.00	\$106.00	\$69.95	\$208.00	\$128.00
	Lowest	\$69.95	\$71.95	\$47.95	\$129.95	\$81.95
	% Difference	55.8%	47.3%	45.9%	60.1%	56.2%
	Average	\$89.48	\$88.98	\$58.95	\$168.98	\$104.98
Queens	Highest	\$85.99	\$85.99	\$56.99	\$166.59	\$102.39
	Lowest	\$62.00	\$61.95	\$41.95	\$130.00	\$76.00
	% Difference	38.7%	38.8%	35.9%	28.2%	34.7%
	Average	\$73.99	\$73.97	\$49.47	\$148.30	\$89.20
Staten Island	Highest	\$86.00	\$88.19	\$56.59	\$156.49	\$101.99
	Lowest	\$73.69	\$72.99	\$48.65	\$136.99	\$88.45
	% Difference	16.7%	20.8%	16.3%	14.2%	15.3%
	Average	\$79.85	\$80.59	\$52.62	\$146.74	\$95.22

CID finds that while the Drug Retail Price List law was designed to make comparison-shopping for prescription drugs easier, significant barriers remain. Compliance among pharmacies is low. With so little information readily available, it is still difficult and inconvenient to obtain a sampling of prices for a given prescription. To give consumers the information they need to effectively shop around for the lowest-cost prescription drugs and to help lower prescription drug prices, CID recommends the following:

- **Pass legislation mandating that the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) track prescription drug prices citywide and disseminate them online.**
- **DCA should aggressively enforce the Drug Retail Price List law.**
- **Pass a resolution calling on the New York State Board of Pharmacy to implement an awareness campaign to educate consumers about the Drug Retail Price List.**
- **Pass a resolution calling for the addition of consumer advocates to the New York State Board of Pharmacy.**
- **Consumers: Shop Around.**
- **Introduce legislation requiring the City of New York to create a prescription drug discount program.**
- **Introduce a resolution calling on Congress to lift prohibitions on Canadian drug imports.**

BACKGROUND

In the face of ever-increasing health-care costs, the large numbers of people without adequate insurance have forced health care affordability to the fore as a matter of public policy and legislative action nationwide. Trends in prescription drug coverage are no different. It is widely acknowledged that prescription drug prices are high — high enough that some Americans cross the border into Canada or Mexico to fill their prescriptions at lower cost.¹ And because pharmacies do not advertise their retail prices for prescription drugs, consumers often do not know whether they are getting the lowest prices possible.

New York State law has attempted to address this issue. This investigation was designed to assess how easy it is to comparison-shop for prescription medication in New York City, how great price disparities between pharmacies actually are, and what the implications are for New York City consumers.

The High Cost of Prescription Drugs

New York State reportedly has the fourth highest retail drug prices in the country,² and an estimated 4.7 million New Yorkers — roughly one in every four people — do not have prescription drug coverage.³ It is a sad fact that the high price of prescription drugs forces many people without insurance to choose between their prescription drugs and other basic needs in order to live within sometimes tight budgets.⁴

¹ Len Maniace. “Quest for Affordable Drugs.” *The Journal News* (Westchester County, NY). 5 Oct 2003, 1A.

² Jennifer Steinhauer. “New York, Which Made Medicaid Big, Looks to Cut It Back.” *The New York Times*. 3 March 2003.

³ Assemblyman Jeff Klein. *Filled Prescriptions, Empty Pockets*. 8 June 2003. Also on the web at <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=080>. [Last accessed 14 January 2004.]

⁴ See Klein, and Senator Charles Schumer. *New Yorkers Spending More Money for Rx Drugs Than People in Most Other States*, June 2002.

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) conducted a recent survey of pharmacies throughout New York State and compared them to the prices pharmaceutical companies charge one of its “most favored” customers — the federal government.⁵ As a large purchaser, the federal government can negotiate lower-than-retail prices for the drugs it purchases for veterans, federal employees and retirees. Using this price, known as the Federal Supply Price, as a benchmark, the NYPIRG study found that uninsured New Yorkers are paying, on average, double what the federal government pays.

The high price of prescription medications affects older people most severely. Senior citizens consume more over-the-counter and prescription medicines than any other age group.⁶ Because seniors are more likely to suffer from a number of diseases or disabilities simultaneously, they are also more likely to require many different drugs at the same time. Seniors represent 13% of the total population, yet account for 34% of all prescriptions dispensed and 42% of all prescription drug spending.⁷

Many senior citizens face the prospect of deteriorating health while living within a fixed income. A 2002 study found that 19% of seniors in New York State had no form of prescription drug coverage,⁸ and that these seniors were more likely than average not to fill prescriptions due to cost, to skip doses to make their prescriptions last longer and to spend less on other basic needs in order to afford prescription medication.⁹

⁵ Blair Horner *et al.* “A Bitter Pill: The High Cost of Prescription Drugs in New York State.” October 2003. The Department of Veterans Affairs oversees the federal supply schedule prices, available online at www.vapbm.org/PBM/prices.htm.

⁶ The National Institution on Aging. Health Information – *Medicines: Use Them Safely*. Also on the web at www.nia.nih.gov/health/agepages/medicine.htm [Last accessed 23 September 2003].

⁷ Families USA. *Hard to Swallow – Rising Drug Prices for America’s Seniors*. November 1999. Also on the web at www.familiesusa.org [Last accessed 14 January 2004].

⁸ Dana Gelb Safran *et al.* “Prescription Drug Coverage and Seniors: How Well are States Closing the Gap?” Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and the Commonwealth Organization. Available at <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/hlthaff.w2.253v1.pdf>. Exhibit 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Exhibit 6.

In efforts to lower prescription drug prices for the uninsured or underinsured, state and local jurisdictions around the country have instituted their own measures to bring lower prices to consumers. These efforts have largely taken the form of prescription drug discount programs.

By aggregating consumer demand, the Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) who administer these prescription drug discount programs can use their participants' market power to negotiate discounts with pharmaceutical companies and/or networks of pharmacies. PBMs charge members a fee for a prescription drug discount card that gets them discounts ranging from five to more than 50 percent. AARP, for example, offers its members one such card for \$19.95 annually.¹⁰ Numerous counties and states have begun to implement similar programs.¹¹

In New York State, Nassau County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in October 2003 for a county-wide pharmacy discount card program to offer residents "significant discounts" at "most" retail pharmacies in the County "at little or no cost to County residents."¹² Because costs will be borne by residents as a fee for enrollment, the program is designed to have no budgetary impact on Nassau County. New York City Council Speaker Gifford Miller has proposed that New York City join Nassau County's RFP and called on Mayor Michael Bloomberg to use his executive authority to do so.¹³ While Mayor Bloomberg has not publicly given a position on this proposal, he has informed

¹⁰ AARP Health Care Options Pharmacy Services. <http://www.aarppharmacy.com/AARPnet/mc/mcSaveMore.aspx>. [Last accessed 26 Jan 2004.] Annual AARP membership, required to qualify for this program, is an additional \$12.50 ("Join AARP." <http://www.aarp.org/membership/aarp/Articles/join.html> [Last accessed 26 Jan 2004].).

¹¹ See Mark Hornbeck and Charlie Cain. "Michigan Uninsured to Get Prescription Discounts." *The Detroit News*. 25 Jan 2004, 1A.

¹² Request for Proposals (RFP) for Pharmacy Discount Card Program. Nassau County Office of the Comptroller. 31 Oct 2003, 8.

¹³ Letter to the Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg. 19 Nov 2003.

the Nassau County Comptroller's office that the City of New York will not be joining this program.¹⁴

Taking advantage of pharmaceutical industry practices that set prices significantly lower in Canada than in the United States, the City of Springfield, Massachusetts, began purchasing prescription drugs from Canada this past summer for its workers and retirees. In its first three months, the program enrolled 1,600 people and reportedly saved enrollees \$600,000.¹⁵ Montgomery, Alabama has since followed suit. In the meantime, a number of states are also exploring this option.¹⁶

Because drugs from foreign countries are not inspected and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), they do not have the same guarantees of safety that drugs sold in the United States do. Nevertheless, in an independent study, the State of Illinois concluded that Canadian drug imports were safe, and that Canadian regulatory systems provide "substantially equivalent protection for the health and safety of the public" as is found in Illinois.¹⁷ The FDA maintains that importing drugs from Canada is illegal and unsafe.¹⁸

Citing high potential savings, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg joined Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich in petitioning the FDA to allow cities and states to

¹⁴ Communication between Nassau County Comptroller's office and New York City Mayor's office. 20 Jan 2004.

¹⁵ "Springfield Meds: By the numbers." City of Springfield, Massachusetts. <http://www.cityofspringfieldmass.com/springfieldmeds.htm> [Last accessed 27 Jan 2004].

¹⁶ Deborah Barfield Berry. "Crossing the Border; Cities, states turn to Canada to cut drug costs." *Newsday*. 2 Nov 2003, A5.

¹⁷ Ram Kamath, Pharm.D. and Scott McKibbin. *Report on Feasibility of Employees and Retirees Safely and Effectively Purchasing Prescription Drugs from Canadian Pharmacies*. Office of Special Advocate for Prescription Drugs, Illinois Department of Central Management Services. 27 Oct 2003.

¹⁸ Gardiner Harris and Monica Davey. "U.S. Steps Up Effort Against Drug Imports." *The New York Times*. 24 Jan 2004, C1.

import prescription drugs from Canada.¹⁹ At the time, Mayor Bloomberg asserted that “[his] administration supports any measure that will bring down drug costs for New Yorkers.”²⁰

Prescription Drug Price Disparities

Beyond the generally high prices of prescription medication, several studies — dating at least as far back as 1985²¹ — have found that retail prescription prices in New York State and New York City can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy, sometimes widely. A statewide investigation released in May 2002 by New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer found, for example, that the cash price of the cholesterol drug Lipitor varied more than \$50 between pharmacies in Westchester County.²² Finding similarly disparate prices in New York City, DCA Commissioner Gretchen Dykstra committed to “using [the agency’s] authority to address this issue.”²³

Empirical research shows that price-shopping for prescription drugs is generally low — around 10% of consumers actively comparison-shop — even

¹⁹ “Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Joins Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich in Petitioning the FDA to Let States and Cities Import Prescription Drugs from Canada” [press release]. 29 Oct 2003. http://home.nyc.gov/portal/index.jsp?pageID=mayor_press_release&catID=1194&doc_name=http%3A%2F%2Fhome.nyc.gov%2Fhtml%2Fom%2Fhtml%2F2003b%2Fpr308-03.html&cc=unused1978&rc=1194&ndi=1 [Last accessed 27 Jan 2004].

²⁰ “Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg Joins Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich in Petitioning the FDA to Let States and Cities Import Prescription Drugs from Canada.” Press Conference. 29 Oct 2003. Online video at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/html/2003b/pca102903.asx> [last accessed 28 Jan 2004].

²¹ William R. Greer. “Prices for Drugs Vary Widely, Study Finds.” *The New York Times*. 28 Dec 1985, 48. For reports of similar studies through the years, see also Associated Press. “A Bitter Pill, and Dearer.” *The New York Times*. 27 Feb 1995, B3; Margaret Ramirez. “Giuliani: Compare Medicine Prices/Survey: Queens Has Best Costs.” *Newsday*. 26 Jan 1997, A20; and Angela Mosconi. “Big Swings Found in Prescription Prices Here.” *New York Post*. 24 Feb 2000, 9.

²² “Statewide Investigation Reveals Widespread Violation of Price Posting Law; Spitzer promotes consumer awareness for prescription drug pricing” [press release]. Office of New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. 8 May 2002. http://www.oag.state.ny.us/press/2002/may/may08a_02.html. [Last accessed 16 Jan 2004.]

though price disparities can be great.²⁴ This suggests that the time, effort and resources involved in comparison-shopping for drugs is greater than the anticipated savings — that is, that consumers resign themselves to the price they're charged at the cash register because they can not easily find better prices elsewhere.²⁵

To make price-shopping easier, a 1973 New York State law mandated that pharmacies display a Prescription Price Poster, a list of 150 commonly prescribed drugs with each pharmacy's prices handwritten on the poster. The law contained no requirement that the prices on the poster be regularly updated, and many of the same studies that found widely disparate prescription drug prices within New York State or City also found extremely poor compliance with the Prescription Price Poster law.²⁶ On August 6, 2002, the New York State Legislature amended this law to create a regularly updated Drug Retail Price List.²⁷ The State's intent was not only to allow consumers to have easy access and up-to-date prescription prices, but also to encourage consumers to comparison-shop for lower drug prices.²⁸

The law now requires that the New York State Board of Pharmacy — a body comprised of nine State-certified pharmacists charged with monitoring compliance with pharmacy regulations²⁹ — annually compile a list of the 150 most commonly prescribed drugs, and provide this list to all pharmacies registered in the State. Each pharmacy is required to append its prices to this

²³ "Seniors in Same Neighborhoods Pay Widely Different Prices for the Same Prescription Drug, DCA Survey Says" [press release]. New York City Department of Consumer Affairs. 24 Sept 2002. Also at www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/dca/html/norc_pr.html [Last accessed 20 Jan 2004].

²⁴ Alan T. Sorenson. "An Empirical Model of Heterogeneous Consumer Search for Retail Prescription Drugs." 14 Sept 2001.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, at 18.

²⁶ For example, Spitzer. See also Greer, and Frankie Edozien. "Green Has an Rx for Pill-Price Gouger\$." *New York Post*. 6 Aug 2000.

²⁷ New York State Senate Bill S.4647-A amended the New York State Consolidated Laws, Article 137; Pharmacy §6826.

²⁸ Governor's Approval Memorandum #2. Retail Drug Price Lists – Chapter 284, S. 4647-A. *New York State Legislative Annual 2002*, 165.

annual list to create its Drug Retail Price List. Pharmacies are required to update the prices weekly, and distribute a copy of the list to consumers upon request. They are also required to post a sign, either in the waiting area or where prescriptions are accepted or dispensed, advertising the availability of this list. The law gave pharmacies one year from its enactment to come into compliance.

Neither State nor City law requires pharmacies to disclose their prescription drug prices over the phone, but the New York State Board of Pharmacy encourages the practice as a matter of policy.³⁰

While this investigation probes New York City's prescription drug price disparities, Suffolk County has made prescription drug prices in its pharmacies public, with a program that asks pharmacies to submit their prices for commonly prescribed medications.³¹ The information is posted quarterly on the county website.³² This is a voluntary program, however, and only 12 pharmacies in the county currently participate.³³

²⁹ New York State Consolidated Laws, Article 137; Pharmacy §6804.

³⁰ Office of the Professions – New York State Education Department. *Questions and Answers for Pharmacist and Pharmacies – October 2003*. Also on the web at www.op.nysed.gov/pharmqa703.htm, last accessed 26 November 2003.

³¹ Henry Gilgoff. "Suffolk Drug Program Still Strong." *Newsday*. 23 Mar 2003, F9.

³² Suffolk County Prescription Drug Cost Comparison Program. <http://www.co.suffolk.ny.us/Office%20for%20the%20Aging/Drug%20Survery%20master.pdf>. Last accessed 20 Jan 2004.

³³ *Infra* note 31.

METHODOLOGY

Council Investigation Division (CID) investigators surveyed pharmacies throughout New York City, both through site visits and by telephone, to determine whether:

- A sign was posted indicating that the Drug Retail Price list was available;
- Hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list were available;
- Price quotes could be obtained; and
- Prescription drug prices varied between and within boroughs.

Pharmacy locations were randomly chosen from within four community districts in each borough.³⁴ CID randomly chose 20% of the pharmacies available within each community district, for a total of 90 locations citywide. Investigators visited 15 pharmacies in the Bronx, 18 in Brooklyn, 30 in Manhattan, 16 in Queens and 11 in Staten Island.

Site Visits

CID investigators conducted site visits to determine whether the pharmacies posted signs indicating the availability of the Drug Retail Price List and whether they made hardcopies of the price list available.

After each site visit, investigators filled out a survey form noting:

- Presence or absence of a posted sign notifying consumers of the availability of the Drug Retail Price list; and
- Availability of hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list.

³⁴ Staten Island has only three community districts. CID sampled 20% of the borough's pharmacies.

Telephone Survey

Because the site visits yielded scanty results,³⁵ CID investigators contacted all 90 pharmacies by phone during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm) to obtain comparative price information for five common prescription medications. During the calls, investigators told pharmacists that they had prescriptions for a 30-day supply of the following medications:³⁶

1. Lipitor (10 mg./30 tablets) — helps lower blood cholesterol for patients who are at risk of heart disease or stroke.
2. Allegra (180 mg./30 tablets) — an antihistamine.
3. Norvasc (5 mg./30 tablets) — lowers high blood pressure (hypertension).
4. Prevacid (30 mg./30 tablets) — prevents the production of acid in the stomach.
5. Celebrex (200 mg./30 tablets) — used to reduce inflammation and ease mild to moderate pain due to arthritis.

Investigators asked whether the pharmacists could provide them with the cash price for each medication over the phone and filled out a survey either noting the price or that the price was not given. In addition, investigators noted any additional comments, such as the reason(s) why a pharmacist would not disclose a prescription drug price over the phone.

³⁵ See Findings.

³⁶ For more information on each of the prescription drugs, see www.pdrhealth.com (the online version of the Physician's Desk Reference).

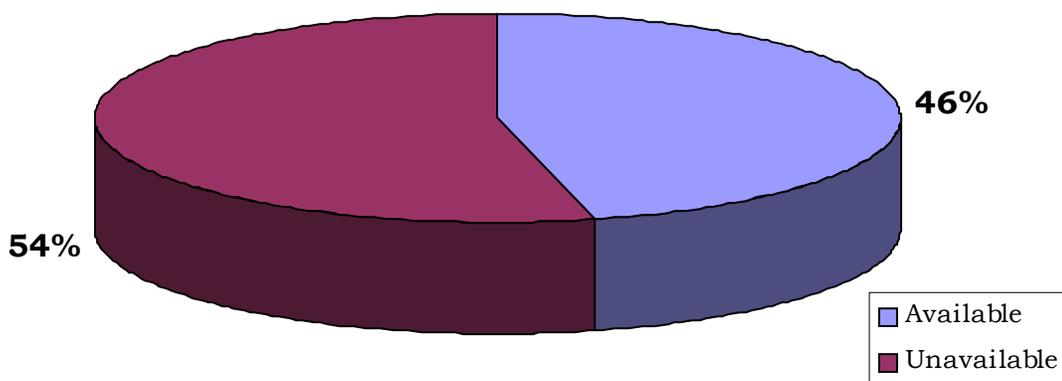
FINDINGS

The following are the results obtained during the investigation:

Site Visits – Cumulative Results

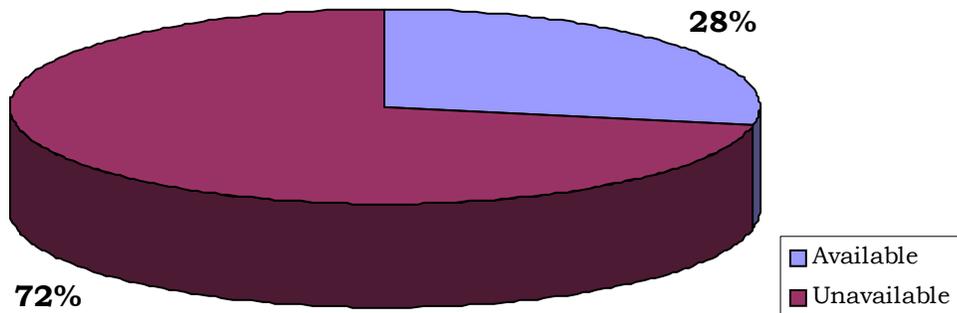
Forty-one (46%) of the pharmacies had a Drug Retail Price list sign posted. Forty-nine (54%) pharmacies did not post a sign alerting consumers of the availability of hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list.

Prevalence of Signs Notifying Consumers of Availability of Drug Retail Price List



Of the 90 pharmacies surveyed, only 25 (28%) of the pharmacies had hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list available upon request. Sixty-five (72%) of the pharmacies visited did not provide hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list to consumers upon request.

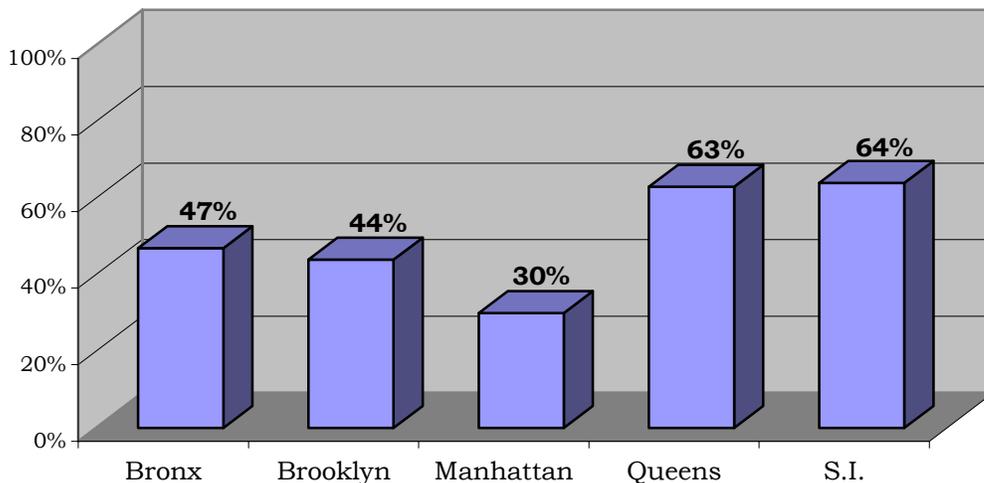
General Availability of Hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price List



Site Visits – Comparison by Boroughs

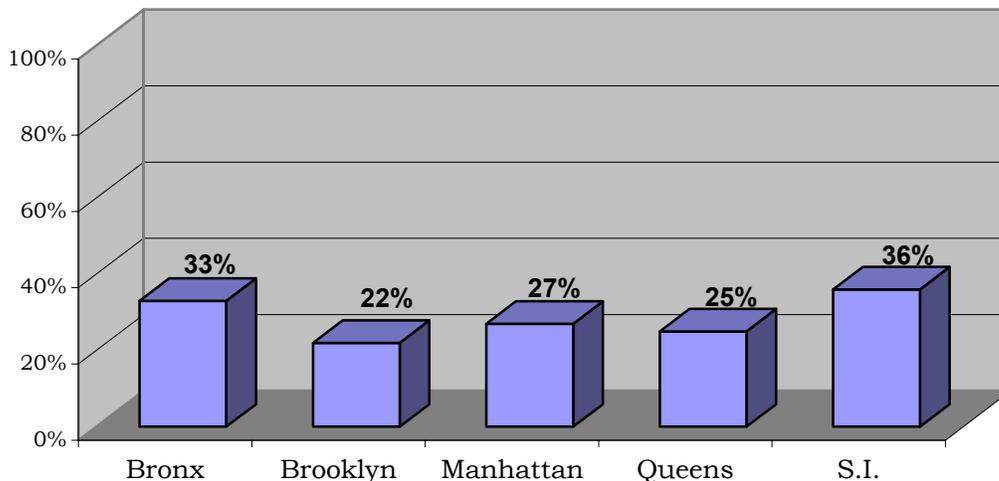
In Staten Island, 64% of the pharmacies surveyed posted a sign notifying consumers of the availability of hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price List. This was the highest compliance rate of all the boroughs, with Queens marginally behind at 63% and the others at lower rates (in descending order): the Bronx (47%), Brooklyn (44%) and Manhattan (30%).

Presence of Signs Notifying Consumers of Existence of the Drug Retail Price List



In a borough-by-borough comparison, Staten Island rated the highest in the availability of hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list as well, with a 36% compliance rate. This compared (in descending order) to the Bronx (33%), Brooklyn (22%), Manhattan (27%), and Queens (25%).

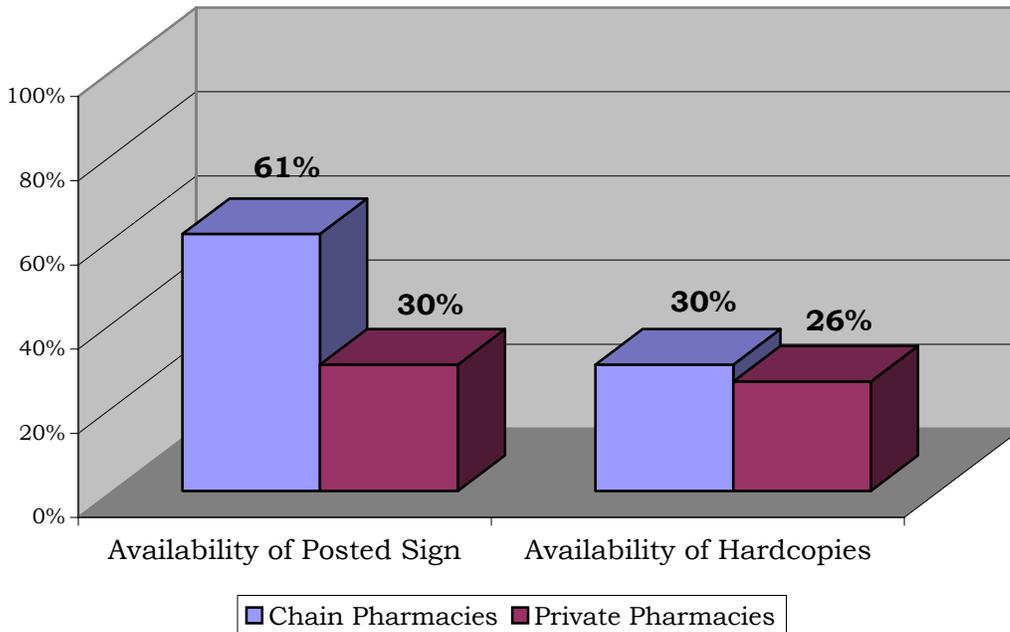
Availability of Hardcopies of Drug Retail Price List by Borough



Site Visits – Chain vs. Privately-owned stores

CID also analyzed the results for disparities between chain pharmacies and privately-owned establishments. With regard to the availability of the sign, chain pharmacies showed a rate of compliance more than twice as high as their independently-owned counterparts (61% and 30%, respectively). Moreover, chain pharmacies had hardcopies of the Drug Retail Price list available upon request at a slightly greater rate than privately-owned pharmacies as well—30%, compared to 26%.

Compliance of Chain vs. Private Pharmacies



Telephone Survey – Cumulative Results

Of the ninety pharmacies contacted by phone, 67 (74%) of the pharmacies gave price quotes over the phone. Twenty-three (26%) of the pharmacies refused to disclose their prices over the phone, with most claiming that pharmacists needed to see the prescriptions before quoting a price. On one occasion, a pharmacist told an investigator that he couldn't disclose a price quote over the phone because it was against the law to do so - which is, in fact, not the case.³⁷

CID determined the lowest price, highest price and citywide average price for all five prescription drugs. Differences between the highest and lowest prices for the prescription medications ranged from \$28.00 (in the case of Norvasc) to

³⁷ *Infra* note 30. While it does not compel pharmacists to do so, the New York State Board of Pharmacy does encourage them to provide drug retail prices over the phone.

\$78.05 (for Prevacid). The table below compares these figures to the prices the Federal government pays for the same type of prescription drugs.³⁸

Table 1 - Differences in Prices Paid By Uninsured NYC Residents and the Federal Government

Prescription Drug	Lowest Price Obtained in NYC	Highest Price Obtained in NYC	Average cash price paid by uninsured NYC residents	Federal Supply Price (FSP)	% Difference bet. FSP and Avg. NYC Cash Price
Lipitor	\$62.00	\$109.00	\$80.58	\$41.12	96%
Norvasc	\$41.95	\$69.95	\$53.74	\$26.03	106%
Prevacid	\$129.95	\$208.00	\$153.34	\$85.66	79%
Celebrex	\$60.19	\$128.00	\$97.40	\$66.60	46%
Allegra	\$61.95	\$106.00	\$82.33	\$46.43	77%

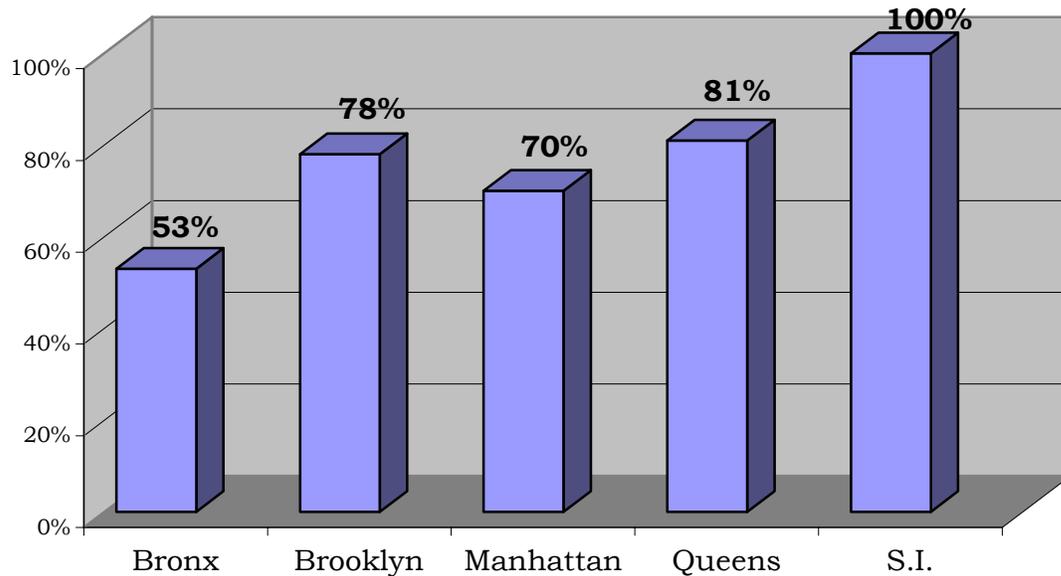
Telephone Survey – Comparison by Boroughs

Between Boroughs

With respect to the ease with which it was possible to obtain price information over the phone, Staten Island had the highest rating with 100% success. This compared (in descending order) to Queens (81%), Brooklyn (78%), Manhattan (70%) and the Bronx (53%).

³⁸ The Federal Supply Price (FSP) was downloaded from the Federal Supply Schedule (www.vapbm.org/PBM/prices.htm) on 15 January 2004. Since the FSP does not include pharmacy dispensing fees, an extra \$4 was added to each price to reflect a reasonable fee. This is consistent with the methodology employed by Horner *et al.* (see note 4).

Ability to Obtain Price Quotes Over the Phone



On average, Manhattan pharmacies charged higher prices than pharmacies in the other boroughs, regardless of medication. When comparing the average prices obtained between boroughs for each prescription drug, the following results were obtained:

- **Lipitor:** The highest average price obtained came from pharmacies located in Manhattan with an average price of \$83.89. This compared to the average prices obtained from pharmacies located (in descending order) in Staten Island (\$80.36), the Bronx (\$79.65), Brooklyn (\$79.51) and Queens (\$77.12).
- **Allegra:** The highest average price obtained came from pharmacies located in Manhattan with an average price of \$85.59. This compared to the average prices obtained from pharmacies located (in descending order) in the Bronx (\$83.83), Brooklyn (\$80.94), Staten Island (\$80.67) and Queens (\$79.07).
- **Norvasc:** The highest average price obtained came from pharmacies located in Manhattan with an average price of \$55.99. This compared to the average prices obtained from pharmacies located (in descending

order) in the Bronx (\$54.33), Brooklyn (\$52.90), Queens (\$52.40) and Staten Island (\$51.69).

- **Prevacid:** The highest average price obtained came from pharmacies located in Manhattan with an average price of \$158.53. This compared to the average prices obtained from pharmacies located (in descending order) in the Bronx (\$153.55), Brooklyn (\$153.18), Queens (\$149.24) and Staten Island (\$148.36).
- **Celebrex:** The highest average price obtained came from pharmacies located in Manhattan with an average price of \$100.69. This compared to the average prices obtained from pharmacies located (in descending order) in Staten Island (\$97.23), Brooklyn (\$96.73), Queens (\$95.62) and the Bronx (\$93.26).

Within Boroughs

Some significant differences were found in the prices pharmacies within the same borough were charging. The following are the biggest such differences found:

- In the Bronx, the highest cash price obtained for a month's supply of Celebrex was \$102.00, while the lowest cash price obtained was \$60.19 – a \$41.81 difference.
- In Brooklyn, the highest cash price obtained for a month's supply of Prevacid was \$173.99, while the lowest price obtained was \$130.00 – a \$43.99 difference.
- In Manhattan, the highest cash price obtained for a month's supply of Prevacid was \$208.00, while the lowest cash price was \$129.95 – a difference of \$78.05.

The table below summarizes our findings.

Table 2 – Lowest/Highest Individual Prices Per Borough

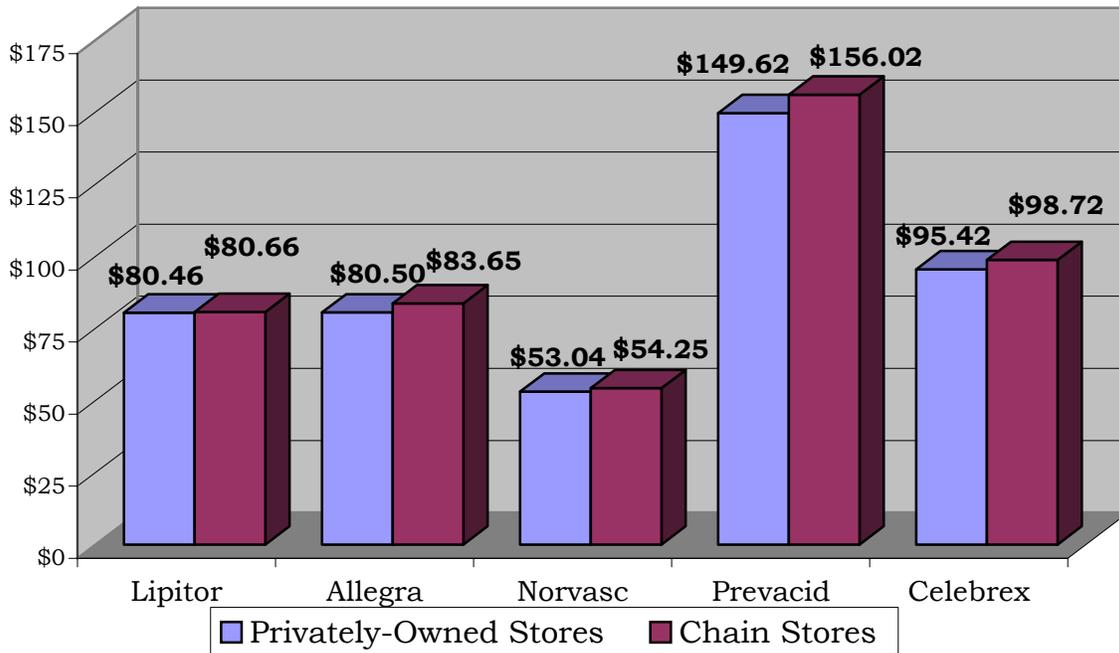
Borough	High/Low	Lipitor	Allegra	Norvasc	Prevacid	Celebrex
Bronx	Highest	\$85.99	\$85.99	\$56.59	\$168.99	\$102.00
	Lowest	\$74.99	\$79.00	\$48.00	\$145.99	\$60.19
	% Difference	14.7%	8.9%	17.9%	15.8%	69.5%
	Average	\$80.49	\$82.50	\$52.30	\$157.49	\$81.10
Brooklyn	Highest	\$86.56	\$86.99	\$56.99	\$173.99	\$102.87
	Lowest	\$70.00	\$71.00	\$46.00	\$130.00	\$85.00
	% Difference	23.7%	22.5%	23.9%	33.8%	21.0%
	Average	\$78.28	\$78.99	\$51.50	\$151.99	\$93.94
Manhattan	Highest	\$109.00	\$106.00	\$69.95	\$208.00	\$128.00
	Lowest	\$69.95	\$71.95	\$47.95	\$129.95	\$81.95
	% Difference	55.8%	47.3%	45.9%	60.1%	56.2%
	Average	\$89.48	\$88.98	\$58.95	\$168.98	\$104.98
Queens	Highest	\$85.99	\$85.99	\$56.99	\$166.59	\$102.39
	Lowest	\$62.00	\$61.95	\$41.95	\$130.00	\$76.00
	% Difference	38.7%	38.8%	35.9%	28.2%	34.7%
	Average	\$73.99	\$73.97	\$49.47	\$148.30	\$89.20
Staten Island	Highest	\$86.00	\$88.19	\$56.59	\$156.49	\$101.99
	Lowest	\$73.69	\$72.99	\$48.65	\$136.99	\$88.45
	% Difference	16.7%	20.8%	16.3%	14.2%	15.3%
	Average	\$79.85	\$80.59	\$52.62	\$146.74	\$95.22

Based on these findings, a hypothetical senior citizen with arthritis, high cholesterol, hypertension and gastric acid disorders could be paying anywhere from \$294.09 to \$514.95 every month for the medications — Celebrex, Lipitor, Norvasc and Prevacid, respectively — to treat these conditions — a \$220.86 difference.

Telephone Survey – Chain vs. Privately-owned stores

CID also looked at differences in prices between chain and privately owned pharmacies. It was observed that the prices obtained from chain pharmacies were slightly higher than the prices charged by privately owned pharmacies. The average difference in prices varied from \$0.20 to \$6.40 per prescription drug.

**Comparison Of Average Prices for
Privately-Owned Pharmacies vs. Chain Pharmacies**



CONCLUSIONS

As our findings show, prices for identical prescriptions can vary from pharmacy to pharmacy in New York City by as much as \$30 to \$80; a price in one pharmacy can be more than twice as expensive as it is in another. While everything else at a drug store has a price tag stamped on it, prices for prescription drugs often remain a mystery until a clerk rings them up at the cash register. The intent of New York State's Drug Retail Price List law was to make this information open and available, thereby making it easier for consumers to comparison-shop.

Nevertheless, a number of factors are blunting this law's efficacy, with widespread noncompliance first and foremost among them. Only 28% of pharmacies investigated actually had a Drug Retail Price List available for consumers. This is unfortunate, because consumers could realize potentially hundreds or even thousands of dollars in savings every year, given the information. As the situation now stands, the law does not and cannot provide meaningful opportunities for consumers to comparison-shop.

When DCA found evidence of significant price disparities for prescription drugs in New York City in 2002, Commissioner Dykstra pledged to use her agency's authority to address the issue. Our research did not unearth any evidence that DCA has taken action on it since that time. There is, however an obvious and urgent need for enforcement; DCA can and should undertake to enforce this law aggressively.

In the meantime, consumer demand can also help nudge pharmacies into compliance with the Drug Retail Price List law. With increased consumer awareness, uninsured and underinsured New Yorkers will know that they can

and should ask for any pharmacy's Drug Retail Price List before they get their prescriptions filled.

The problem of prescription drug price disparities is not new, but we finally have effective tools to address it. The Internet, which has made sharing and disseminating information cheaper, faster and easier than ever before, can enable us to make use of and strengthen the existing laws in an innovative way. The Drug Retail Price List law already mandates that pharmacies update the prices on the list on a weekly basis. A program similar to Suffolk County's, whereby pharmacies submit their prescription drug prices to the local government so they can be posted on the Internet for easy comparison, would bring pricing information into the public domain on an unprecedented scale. The extremely low participation rates in Suffolk County's voluntary program suggest that mandating participation would make the program more useful and effective.

Furthermore, making public information of retail drug prices citywide will exert pressure on pharmacies to keep prices low — a boon to consumers throughout the City.

The New York State Board of Pharmacy is the body charged with monitoring compliance with pharmacy regulations. By law, it consists of nine State-certified pharmacists.³⁹ Given the widespread impact of pharmacy regulations and the large amounts of money consumers spend on prescription medications, the lack of consumer advocates on the Board of Pharmacy leaves that body without an important voice.

Prescription drugs in New York City are indeed costly — particularly those intended to treat chronic ailments rather than episodic bouts of illness. A

³⁹ *Infra* note 29.

year's supply of Celebrex, which is used to treat arthritis pain and inflammation, can cost anywhere from \$722.28 to \$1,234.44, according to our findings.⁴⁰ Clearly, a person needing these drugs to maintain his or her health could face serious financial hardship.

Any policy prescription to address this issue should look at methods to lower drug prices for consumers. Neither of the strategies considered in this report—prescription drug discount programs, and importation of Canadian drugs—is a panacea. Yet given the budgetary and practical constraints that the City of New York faces, both deserve consideration.

A prescription drug discount program would help millions of New York City residents with no impact on the City's tight budget. Whether the City of New York joins Nassau County's RFP or issues one of its own, significant benefits could accrue to New York City residents. While Mayor Bloomberg has declared he would support "any measure that will bring down drug costs for New Yorkers,"⁴¹ he has failed to seize this opportunity to do just that.

The savings to the City of New York from a Canadian drug importation program, on the other hand, are potentially vast. Nevertheless, legal obstacles make such a program currently impracticable. Provided reasonable expectations of comparable consumer safety measure, however, the FDA should permit cities and states to import drugs from Canada if they so desire.

In the meantime, we encourage New York City consumers to shop around, and look within the five boroughs for the best prices they can get. The savings, we found, can be significant.

⁴⁰ Based on lowest and highest costs of a 30-day supply of Celebrex (\$60.19 and \$102.87) found in this survey (see Findings).

⁴¹ *Infra* note 20.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Create a More Open Market for Prescription Drugs

- **Pass legislation mandating that the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) track prescription drug prices citywide and disseminate them online.**

Legislation is being drafted to mandate that DCA maintain an internet-based clearinghouse on its website for pharmacies' retail drug prices. Working with the Department for the Aging, DCA would email some form of this information to senior centers, NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) programs, Meals on Wheels programs, etc. throughout the City on a regular basis. DCA's website would also be designed to allow consumers to subscribe to periodic emails notifying them of prices for the drugs they specify at the pharmacies they specify. This would give consumers an unprecedented opportunity to comparison-shop online before making any purchases.

- **DCA should aggressively enforce the Drug Retail Price List law.**
Increased enforcement will increase compliance with the law and literally put crucial drug price information in consumers' hands.
- **Pass a resolution calling on the New York State Board of Pharmacy to implement an awareness campaign to educate consumers about the Drug Retail Price List.**

The State Board of Pharmacy needs to extend its education efforts about the Drug Retail Price List to consumers as well as registered pharmacies statewide.

- **Pass a resolution calling for the addition of consumer advocates to the New York State Board of Pharmacy.**

Currently, the Board of Pharmacy is made up of nine State-certified pharmacists. Consumer representation on the Board would be an important step in assuring that State pharmacy policies and practices do not neglect the needs of consumers.

- **Consumers: Shop Around.**

As this investigation finds, huge price differences are possible — and the only way to realize savings is to shop around. Also, remember to ask for generic equivalents for brand-name prescriptions whenever possible.

Lower Prescription Drug Costs

- **Introduce legislation requiring the City of New York to create a prescription drug discount program for uninsured City residents.**

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has not used his executive authority to join Nassau County in a prescription drug discount program. The City Council can, and should, introduce legislation to enact such a program, whether in conjunction with Nassau County or on its own.

- **Introduce a resolution calling on Congress to lift prohibitions on Canadian drug imports.**

If, as the State of Illinois found, the Canadian government imposes substantially similar consumer protections on prescription drugs as does the United States, the FDA ban on prescription drug imports from Canada should be lifted so that cities and states can take advantage of lower prices available abroad.

APPENDIX A:

**Drug Retail Price List Law:
New York State Consolidated Laws
Education Law §6826**

New York State Consolidated Laws – Education Law §6826

S 6826. Drug retail price lists. 1. Every pharmacy shall compile a drug retail price list, which shall contain the names of the drugs on the list provided by the board and the pharmacy's corresponding retail prices for each drug. Every pharmacy shall update its drug retail list at least weekly. Every pharmacy shall provide the drug retail price list to any person upon request.

2. a. The list provided by the board shall be prepared at least annually by the board and distributed to each pharmacy in the state. The list shall be a compendium of the one hundred fifty most frequently prescribed drugs together with their usual dosages for which a prescription is required by the provisions of the "Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act" (21 U.S.C. 301, et seq.; 52 Stat. 1040, et seq.), as amended, or by the commissioner of health. The board shall make the compendium list available to each pharmacy free of charge, both in printed form and in an electronic form that can be used to produce the pharmacy's drug retail list.

b. The drug retail price list shall contain a notice which shall read: "Consult your pharmacist for the selection of the most economical drug product available to fill your prescription"

3. The pharmacy's corresponding retail price means the actual price to be paid by a retail purchaser to the pharmacy for any listed drug at the listed dosage.

4. Pharmacies shall have a sign notifying people of the availability of the drug retail price list, conspicuously posted at or adjacent to the place in the pharmacy where prescriptions are presented for compounding and dispensing, in the waiting area for customers, or in the area where prescribed drugs are delivered.

5. Nothing contained herein shall prevent a pharmacy from changing and charging the current retail price at any time, provided that the listed price is updated at least weekly to reflect the new retail price.

6. The commissioner shall make regulations necessary to implement this section, including how this section is applied to mail-order and internet pharmacies.

APPENDIX B:

List of Surveyed Pharmacies

List of Surveyed Pharmacies

	Pharmacy Name	Address
Bronx		
1	Charmar Pharmacy	781 Lydig Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462
2	CVS Pharmacy	3775 E Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10465
3	CVS Pharmacy	732 Allerton Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467
4	Pathmark Pharmacy Eastchester	1720 Eastchester Road, Bronx, NY 10461
5	Rite Aid Express 1 Hr. Photo	2426 Eastchester Road, Bronx, NY 10469
6	Rite Aid Pharmacies	911 Morris Park Avenue, Bronx, NY 10462
7	Duane Reade Drug Store	2914 3rd Avenue, Bronx, NY 10455
8	Fuller Drug Store	2688 3rd Avenue, Bronx, NY 10454
9	Nisar Pharmacy Inc.	229 East 149th Street, Bronx, NY 10451
10	Recitas Limited	824 E 156th Street, Bronx, NY 10455
11	Rite Aid Pharmacies	650 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10457
12	Rite Aid Pharmacies	592 183rd Street, Bronx, NY 10458
13	Rite Aid Pharmacies	352 E 149th Street, Bronx, NY 10455
14	South Bronx Pharmacy & Surgical Supply	411 E 138th Street, Bronx, NY 10454
15	West Farms Pharmacy	930 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10460
Brooklyn		
16	Berkley Pharmacy	1951 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234
17	Canarsie Plaza Pharmacy	8707 Flatlands Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11236
18	CVS Pharmacy	2472 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234
19	CVS Pharmacy	6702 Fort Hamilton Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11219
20	Duane Reade Drug Store	2265 Ralph Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11234
21	Dyker Heights Pharmacy	8016 13th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11228
22	Eckerd Drugs	8701 4th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11209
23	Globe Drug Store Prescription Dept.	405 86th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11209
24	Powells Pharmacy	7517 3rd Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11209
25	Remsen Pharmacy	8823 Avenue L, Brooklyn, NY 11236
26	A Fair Deal Pharmacy Inc.	849 Broadway, Brooklyn, NY 11206
27	Duane Reade Drug Store	416 Knickerbocker Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11237
28	Dumont Pharmacy Inc.	417 Junius Street, Brooklyn, NY 11212
29	Gulshan Pharmacy Inc.	509 Raplh Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11233
30	Images Pharmacy	1383 Bushwick Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11207
31	Noha Pharmacy Inc.	291 Knickerbocker Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11237
32	Rite Aid Pharmacies	1631 Pitkin Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11212
33	Rite Aid Pharmacies	960 Halsey Street, Brooklyn, NY 11233
Manhattan		
34	Cherry's Pharmacy & Cosmetics	170 E. 84th Street, New York, NY 10028
35	Corby Chemist	988 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10022
36	CVS Pharmacy	1223 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10021
37	CVS Pharmacy	1294 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10128
38	Duane Reade Drugs Store	1191 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10021
39	Duane Reade Drugs Store	773 Lexington Avenue, New York, 10021
40	Duane Reade Drugs Store	630 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10017

List of Surveyed Pharmacies

	Pharmacy Name	Address
41	Duane Reade Drugs Store	465 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10016
42	Duane Reade Drugs Store	866 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10022
43	Duane Reade Drugs Store	852 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10017
44	East View Pharmacy	1751 2nd Avenue. New York, NY 10128
45	Eckerd Drugs	1299 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10021
46	Elliot Pharmacy Prescription Dept.	250 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10010
47	Elm Drugs	298 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10009
48	Health Wise Pharmacy	1494 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021
49	Lascoff Fredk D	150 E. 82nd Street, New York, NY 10028
50	Lustol Company	799 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10021
51	Pollock Bailey Pharmacy	405 E. 57th Street, New York, NY 10022
52	Rainbow Pharmacies	1449 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10021
53	Rite Aid Express 1 Hour Photo NY	223 E. 86th Street, New York, NY 10028
54	Rite Aid Express Pkg Service	1849 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10128
55	Rite Aid Pharmacies	542 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10016
56	Tower Chemist	1257 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10021
57	Drug Loft II	1412 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10029
58	Keane Pharmacy	586 Lenox Avenue, New York, NY 10037
59	Lenox Pharmacy Inc.	27 Lenox Avenue, New York, NY 10026
60	M&N Pharmacy	2240 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10035
61	Metro North Pharmacy	1972 1st Avenue, New York, NY 10029
62	Rite Aid	1892 3rd Avenue, New York, NY 10029
63	RX Center	2325 1st Street, New York, NY 10035
Queens		
64	Eckerd Drugs	4320 Bell Blvd, Bayside, NY 11361
65	Eckerd Drugs	255-01 Union Turnpike, Geln Oaks, NY 11004
66	Marathon Pharmacy	24917 Northern Blvd, Little Neck, NY 11363
67	Rite Aid Pharmacies	3920 Bell Blvd, Bayside, NY 11361
68	Rite Aid Pharmacies	218-35 Hempstead Avenue, Queens Village, NY 11429
69	Rocky Hill Pharmacy Inc.	236-01 Braddock Avenue, Bellerose, NY 11426
70	Roots Drugs Inc.	24908 Hillside Avenue, Queens Village, NY 11426
71	Astor Pharmacy Inc.	3518 Ditmars Blvd, Astoria, NY 11105
72	Central Pharmacy	1338 Central Ave, Far Rockaway, NY 11691
73	CVS Pharmacy	2280 31st Street, Astoria, NY 11105
74	CVS Pharmacy	271 Beach 20th Street, Far Rockaway, NY 11691
75	Eckerd Drugs	3214 31st Street, Astoria, NY 11106
76	Eckerd Drugs	3099 Steinway Street, Astoria, NY 11103
77	Ideal Drugs Inc	1901 Mott Ave, Inwood, NY 11096
78	Roger's Pharmacy	29-63 21st Avenue, Astoria, NY 11105
79	Strand Pharmacy Prescription Dept.	2501 Broadway, Astoria, NY 11106

List of Surveyed Pharmacies

	Pharmacy Name	Address
Staten Island		
80	Annadale Family Pharmacy Inc	831 Annadale Road, Staten Island, NY 10312
81	CVS Pharmacy	778 Manor Road, Staten Island, NY 10314
82	CVS Pharmacy	1131 Bay Street, Staten Island, NY 10305
83	Dongan Hills Pharmacy	1560 Richmond Road, Staten Island, NY 10304
84	Duane Reade Drug Store	4363 Amboy Road, Staten Island, NY 10312
85	Duane Reade Drug Store	3155 Amboy Road, Staten Island, NY 10306
86	Duane Reade Drug Store	1795 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10314
87	Pathmark Pharmacy of New Dorp	2660 Hylan Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10306
88	Pharmacy Clove	1050 Clove Road, Staten Island, NY 10301
89	Thompkinsville Pharmacy	45 Victory Blvd, Staten Island, NY 10301
90	Walgreen Drug Store	1551 Richmond Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314

APPENDIX C:
Drug Retail Price List

DRUG RETAIL PRICE LIST

“CONSULT YOUR PHARMACIST FOR THE SELECTION OF THE MOST ECONOMICAL DRUG PRODUCT AVAILABLE TO FILL YOUR PRESCRIPTION”

DRUG	QUANTITY	PRICE	DRUG	QUANTITY	PRICE
ACCUPRIL 10 MG TABS	30		BUTALB/ACETAMIN/CAF	30	
ACCUPRIL 20 MG TABS	30		CEFADROXIL 500 MG	20	
ACETAM.COD.#3 TABS	20		CELEBREX 200 MG	30	
ACIPHEX 20 MG	30		CEPHALEXIN 250 MG	28	
ADDERALL XR 20 MG	30		CEPHALEXIN 500 MG	8	
ADVAIR 250/50	60		CELEXA 20 MG	30	
ALTACE 5.0 MG	30		CELEXA 40 MG	30	
ALBUTEROL 0.083%	75		CHLORHEXIDINE 0.12%	473	
ALLEGRA – D	60		CILOXAN 0.3% OPH SOLUTION	5	
ALLEGRA TABS 60 MG	60		CIPRO HC OTIC	10	
ALLEGRA 180 MG TAB	30		CIPRO 250 MG	20	
ALBUTEROL INHALER	17		CIPRO 500 MG	20	
ALPRAZOLAM 0.5 MG	30		CLARINEX 5 MG	30	
ALLOPURINOL 300 MG	30		CLINDAMYCIN 150 MG	30	
ALTACE 2.5 MG	30		CLONAZEPAM 0.5 MG	60	
AMOXICILLIN CHEW 400	20		CLONAZEPAM 1 MG	60	
AMOXICILLIN 500 MG CAPSULE	30		COMBIVENT AEROSOL	14.7	
AMOXICILLIN 250/5ML	150		COUMADIN 5 MG TABLETS	30	
AMBIEN 5 MG	30		COZAAR 50 MG	30	
AMBIEN 10 MG	30		COLCHICINE 0.6 (WW)	60	
AMOXIL 250 MG CAP	30		CONCERTA 18 MG	30	
AMOXIL 875 MG TABS	20		CONCERTA 36 MG	30	
AMOXIL SUSP 400 MG/5ML	100		CYCLOBENZAPRINE 10 MG	30	
ATENOLOL 50 MG	30		DEXAMETHASONE 4 MG	21	
ATENOLOL 25 MG	30		DEXEDRINE 10 MG SPANSULE	30	
AUGMENTIN 500 MG TABS	20		DEPAKOTE 250 MG	60	
AUGMENTIN 875 MG TABS	20		DEPAKOTE 500 MG	90	
AUGMENTIN 400 MG/ 5ML	100		DIAZEPAM 5 MG	90	
AUGMENTIN ES 600 MG/5ML	125		DIAZEPAM 10 MG	90	
AVELOX 400 MG	10		DIFLUCAN 150 MG	1	
BENZACLIN GEL	25		DOXYCYCLINE 100 MG CAPSULE	20	
BIAXIN 500 MG	20		DURICEF 250/5 ML	100	
BIAXIN XL 500 MG	20		ENALAPRIL 10 MG	30	

Price List Updated on _____

FLOMAX 0.4	30		PLAVIX 75 MG	30	
FLONASE NASAL SPRAY	16		PRAVACHOL 20 MG	30	
FLOVENT 110 MCG	13		PREDNISONE 5 MG	30	
FLOVENT 220 MCG	13		PREDNISONE 10 MG	30	
FLUOXETINE 20 MG	30		PREDNISONE 20 MG	30	
FOSAMAX 70 MG	4		PREMPRO .625/ 2.5	28	
FUROSEMIDE 20 MG	30		PREVACID 30 MG	30	
FUROSEMIDE 40 MG	30		PRILOSEC 20 MG	30	
GUAIFENESIN TR 600 MG	20		PROMETHAZINE/CODEINE	120	
HOMATROPINE / HYDROCODONE SYRUP	120		PROTONIX 40 MG	30	
HYDROCOD.7.5/ APAP.5	30		RHINOCORT AQ NASAL	8.6	
HYDROCOD.7.5/APAP750	30		RISPERDAL 1 MG	30	
HYDROCO 10/APAP 650	30		RISPERDAL 2 MG	30	
HYDROCOD5 MG/500 MG APAP	30		RITALIN 5 MG	90	
HYDROCHLOROTHIAZIDE 25 MG	30		SEROQUEL 100 MG	30	
IBUPROFEN 800 MG	30		SEROQUEL 25 MG	90	
LAMISIL 250 MG TABLET	30		SINGULAIR 10 MG TAB	30	
LANOXIN .25 MG	100		SYNTHROID 0.05 MG	100	
LEVAQUIN 500 MG	10		SYNTHROID .075 MG	100	
LIPITOR 10 MG	30		TEQUIN 400 MG	7	
LIPITOR 20 MG	30		TEMAZEPAM 30 MG	30	
LORAZEPAM 0.5 MG	90		TERAZOL 7 CREAM	45	
LORAZEPAM 1 MG	90		TOBRADEX EYE DROPS	5	
MACROBID 100 MG	14		TOBRADEX EYE OINTMENT	3.5	
MECLIZINE 12.5 MG	90		TOBRAMYCIN EYE DROPS	5	
MECLIZINE 25 MG	90		TRIAMCINOLONE.1% CRM	80	
METFORMIN 500 MG	60		TRAZODONE 50 MG	30	
METROGEL TOPICAL GEL	45		ULTRAM 50 MG	40	
NAPROXEN 500 MG	30		VALTREX 500 MG	30	
NASONEX NASAL SPRAY	17		VIAGRA 50 MG	6	
NASACORT AQ SPRAY	16.5		VICOPROFEN TAB	40	
NEURONTIN 300 MG CAPS	90		VIOXX 25 MG	30	
NEXIUM 40 MG	30		WARFARIN 5 MG	30	
NORVASC 5MG	30		WELLBUTRIN SR 150 MG	60	
OCUFLOX EYE DROPS	5		ZITHROMAX 250 MG	6	
ORTHO TRI CYCLEN	28		ZITHROMAX 200/5 30ML	30	
OXYCODONE 5/APAP 325	20		ZOCOR 10 MG	30	
PATANOL OPHT SOL	5		ZOCOR 20 MG	30	
PAXIL 20MG	30		ZOLOFT 50 MG	30	
PAXIL 40MG	30		ZOLOFT 100 MG	30	
PENICILLIN VK 250 MG	28		ZYPREXA 5 MG	30	
PENICILLIN VK 500 MG	28		ZYRTEC 10 MG	30	

Source: New York State Board of Pharmacy. Also on the web at www.op.nysed.gov/pharm2003pricelist.htm. Last accessed on 29 January 2004.

Price List Updated on _____