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**NYPIRG SURVEY FINDS LARGE DIFFERENCES IN PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICES
AMONG NEW YORK STATE PHARMACIES**

**GROUP URGES STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO STRENGTHEN
CONSUMERS' ABILITY TO SHOP SMART FOR Rx DRUGS**

(Albany, N.Y.) Consumers across the state may be paying a lot more for prescription drugs than they should, according to a survey of government data released today by the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG). NYPIRG used a state Health Department website to review the prices for six of the most frequently prescribed medicines and found that in some cases consumers could be paying as much as \$200 more for the exact same prescription in the exact same region.

Under New York State law, the state Health Department has created a website to allow consumers to comparison shop for the most frequently prescribed medicines. The website allows consumers to search as many as six medications simultaneously by zip code, county or city. The website shows the prices by pharmacy within that region. For consumers who lack adequate coverage for prescription drugs, the Department's website could yield considerable savings. The law also requires that at the checkout area of each pharmacy a written notice must be provided informing consumers about the availability of the website. The website can be found at: <https://apps.health.ny.gov/pdpw/SearchDrugs/Home.action>.

NYPIRG reviewed fourteen regions of the state and examined the prices for six of the most frequently prescribed medications. NYPIRG found an enormous range in prices charged, with the greatest disparity a \$207.75 range in prices in Manhattan for Advair Diskus (a low of \$260 and a high of \$467.75).

In addition, NYPIRG also spot checked twenty-nine pharmacies and could only find the required postings in twelve of them.

According to recent US Census information over one million New Yorkers lack health insurance, meaning they must pay full retail price for prescriptions, and seniors in the Medicare "doughnut hole" also face cost pressures for medicines.

NYPIRG urged that the New York State Education Department audit local pharmacies to ensure compliance with signage requirements and the New York State Health Department to change the name of its website address (<https://apps.health.ny.gov/pdpw/SearchDrugs/Home.action>) to an easier-to-remember address (e.g., www.NYSRxPriceShop.gov).

The NYPIRG report, "Buyer Beware," can be found at www.nypirg.org.

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