



For Immediate Release
Friday, July 31, 2020

For more information contact:
Blair Horner 518 727-4506 (cell)
bhorner@nypirg.org

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

GROUP URGES STATE LAWMAKERS TO REVIEW AND IMPROVE DRUG PRICING PROGRAM

(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 five of the most frequently prescribed brand name medicines and found that in some cases consumers could be paying as much as \$400 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 twelve counties of the state and examined the prices for five of the most frequently prescribed brand-name medications. NYPIRG found an enormous range in prices charged; the drug Spiriva had the greatest range in price, from a high of \$698.72 to a low of \$265.17 – a difference of \$433.55.

NYPIRG urged that the New York State Legislature to review the program and seek to expand it to more drugs – beyond the 150 currently available. In addition, the group urged that regulators audit local pharmacies to ensure compliance with signage requirements. Lastly, it urged 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, “*Shop Smart Or Pay More,*” can be found at www.nypirg.org.

- 30 -