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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG, SPEAKER QUINN AND DEPUTY MAYOR GIBBS LAUNCH
NEW YORK CITY'S FIRST OFFICIAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG
DISCOUNT CARD**

BigAppleRx is Available Free of Charge and Can be Used at More than 2,000 City Pharmacies

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Deputy Mayor Linda I. Gibbs today launched New York City's first official prescription discount card – offering substantial discounts throughout the five boroughs. The BigAppleRx card will be one of the most widely distributed prescription drug discount cards in the nation, and is available to anyone regardless of age, income, citizenship or health insurance status. The cards will save an average of 47 percent on prescription medications and can be used by anyone who lives, works or visits the City. The Mayor, Speaker and Deputy Mayor were joined at the announcement by Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz; City Council Member Letitia James; Chung-Wha Hong, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition; Jack McClurg, Chief Executive Officer of HealthTrans Access; Andrew Rigie, Executive Vice President of the New York City Chapter of the New York State Restaurant Association; Dustee Tucker Jenkins, Vice President of Communications for Target; and Theo Oshiro, Director of Health Advocacy at Make the Road NY.

“All too often, the rising costs of prescription drugs place a burden on New York City households. And this is particularly true for the more than one million New Yorkers who don't have health insurance,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Having access to a free prescription drug card can mean the difference between being able to afford prescriptions and being forced to skip doses. That's why we pledged to issue a New York City card on the campaign trail in 2009 – and now we're fulfilling that promise with the launch of the *BigAppleRx* card.”

“No one should have to be faced with the dilemma of not getting necessary medication because it's too expensive,” said Speaker Christine C. Quinn. “This drug card program will help all New Yorkers get the most cost effective medication whether or not you have insurance and also provide peace of mind. I want to thank the Mayor, Commissioner Farley and Health Access for making *BigAppleRx* a reality.”

“The prohibitive cost of prescription drugs prevents far too many New Yorkers from getting the treatment they need. Last year, more than 800,000 New Yorkers didn't fill a prescription

(more)

because they didn't have the money," said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. "The *BigAppleRx* card will help millions of New Yorkers without health and drug insurance get affordable prescription medication."

"Low-cost prescription medication is essential for many people's health and well-being," said Dr. Thomas Farley, New York City Health Commissioner. "The *BigAppleRx* prescription drug discount card will help those that need affordable prescription medication and lead to better health outcomes and a healthier New York City."

Beginning today New Yorkers can instantly download and print the card, access educational information about prescriptions, compare drug prices and locate the nearest participating pharmacies. The *BigAppleRx* card also has an iPhone application that allows consumers to locate their nearest pharmacy and present the card to pharmacists right from the phone.

New Yorkers who suffer from diabetes can save up to \$831 per year on generic glucose control medication, while those with asthma can potentially save \$667 by using the *BigAppleRx* card to fill their inhaler prescriptions. Allergy sufferers, those who use birth control, people who take medication for high cholesterol or to help manage heart disease can all benefit from *BigAppleRx*'s discounts – up to 15 percent on brand name drugs and 53 percent on generic drugs.

"With baby boomers reaching what I like to call their 'maturer' years, and with an increasing demand for quality, affordable health care, *BigAppleRx* helps ensure that discounts are available for life-improving – and life-sustaining – pharmaceuticals," said Brooklyn Borough President Markowitz. Kudos to Mayor Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Commissioner Dr. Thomas Farley, HealthTrans Access and their community partners for making medication more affordable for all New Yorkers. *BigAppleRx* is a prescription for good health – and just what the doctor ordered."

"The City's ability to produce the first official prescription drug discount card identifies the growing need for savings for our constituency and this City," said Council Member Letitia James. "New Yorkers facing health needs are particularly vulnerable to high-priced prescriptions and often inconvenienced by the pick-up. This discount card allows for easy use by all demographics and provides a safety net to those who profoundly need it."

"We are delighted that the Bloomberg administration is providing discount prescription drug coverage to the hard working men and woman of the restaurant industry," said Andrew Rigie, Executive Vice President of the NYC Chapter of the New York State Restaurant Association. "*BigAppleRx* will serve those who serve us each and every day at restaurants throughout the City. The *BigAppleRx* card is exactly what the business community needs to help ensure that no employee or family member slips through the cracks."

"We know that even with health reform, some people, including immigrants, will still remain underinsured or uninsured," said Chung-Wha Hong, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition. "This new prescription discount card will go a long way to ensuring that these individuals will have access to more affordable prescription drugs. We welcome the city's leadership in setting up this much needed program."




HealthTrans Access – one of the nation’s largest discount drug programs – will assist in administering the program at more than 2,000 (85 percent) of the City’s pharmacies. HealthTrans has 10.6 million discount pharmacy cardholders across the nation and the BigAppleRx card can be used at more than 58,000 pharmacies nationwide.

“HealthTrans is honored to be selected to provide such an important service to the City of New York,” said Jack McClurg, Chief Executive Officer of HealthTrans Access. “We are thrilled to help New Yorkers access the lowest cost medications available. We are confident the users of the card are going to be pleased with the valuable discounts they receive.”

To ensure wide distribution and to make sure all New York City communities know about the card, an extensive educational campaign will begin this week with radio, print, and informative street teams in all five boroughs. Any New Yorker or organization interested in learning how to get or distribute the *BigAppleRx* card should visit www.bigapplerx.com or call 311.

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