



# HEALTH CARE NEWS

A Monthly Publication From the New York State Attorney General's Health Care Bureau

Eliot Spitzer  
Attorney General  
New York State



## NEW DRUG PRICE COMPARISON WEBSITE DRAWS OVER ONE MILLION HITS

*Sharp Price Differences Found in Common Prescription Medications*

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer recently unveiled a new interactive website that allows consumers to compare retail prices for 25 commonly prescribed medications at specific New York pharmacies. In demonstrating the site, [www.NYAGRx.org](http://www.NYAGRx.org), Spitzer noted that drug prices can vary up to \$100 and more for the same prescription at pharmacies a few miles apart. In its first week, the site attracted more than one million hits.

Spitzer's office surveyed 70 randomly-selected pharmacies in 25 counties across the state. Staffers from Spitzer's office visited each pharmacy and asked for its Drug Retail Price List of the 150 most frequently prescribed drugs (with the most commonly prescribed dosage and quantity). State law requires pharmacies to supply this list to consumers upon request and prominently post a sign informing consumers that the list is available. Spitzer's staff reviewed the lists from surveyed pharmacies and posted the prices of 25 commonly prescribed drugs at [www.NYAGRx.org](http://www.NYAGRx.org).

A review of the retail prices for these drugs revealed that prices sometimes differed sharply from pharmacy to pharmacy in a county or region. For example:

\* In the Albany region, Prevacid (dosage: 30mg; quantity: 30), a commonly prescribed antacid, was \$125.59 at the lowest surveyed price and \$165.39 at the highest, a difference of nearly \$40.



### NYAGRx Press Conference:

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer with Blair Horner, Legislative Director, NYPIRG, and Michael Burgess, Executive Director, New York State Senior Action Council. Left: Health Care Bureau Chief, Joseph Baker and Director of Policy, Rashmi Vasisht.

- \* In the New York City region, Allegra (dosage: 60mg; quantity: 60), an allergy relief drug, was \$47.20 at the lowest surveyed price and \$144.97 at the highest, a difference of nearly \$98.
- \* In the Buffalo region, Cipro (dosage: 500mg; quantity: 20), a commonly prescribed antibiotic, was \$110.36 at the lowest surveyed price and \$178.25 at the highest, a difference of nearly \$68.

## HOW TO LOWER YOUR DRUG COSTS

- ✓ **SHOP AROUND.** Prescription drug prices may vary widely from pharmacy to pharmacy and county to county.
- ✓ **ASK FOR THE DRUG RETAIL PRICE LIST.** Every pharmacy is

required to give a print-out of its retail prices of the 150 most commonly prescribed drugs. If your medication is not listed, ask for the pricing information so you can compare prices.

- ✓ **PRICE MATCH.** If you find lower prices at other pharmacies, ask if your pharmacy will match the lower prices.
- ✓ **VISIT [www.NYAGRx.org](http://www.NYAGRx.org)** for prescription drug price comparison information by surveyed stores, address and price. The website also offers a pharmacy locator service to search for local pharmacies by ZIPcode; helpful information about how to lower costs for prescription drugs; links to public and private programs that offer discounted or free medications and information about the proper use of prescription drugs.

Attorney General Eliot Spitzer's Health Care Bureau protects - and advocates for - the rights of all health care consumers statewide. The Bureau operates a Health Care Helpline that assists thousands of New Yorkers with individual problems; investigates and takes law enforcement actions to address systemic problems in the operation of the health care system; and proposes legislation to enhance health care quality and availability in New York State. **To share your views contact the Editor: [Rashmi.Vasisht@oag.state.ny.us](mailto:Rashmi.Vasisht@oag.state.ny.us)**