

# Drug discount program offered

By DANETTE M. WATT  
For the HJ

There's a little-known discount drug card program the Monticello mayor's office wants you to know about. The Prescription Assistance Program offers an average of 30 percent discount on prescription drug costs – at pharmacies large and small.

Chris McWhirter, Mayor Ken Houston's assistant, heard about the program at a conference he attended this spring.

"I thought it would be great to offer our citizens. It seemed like a really good deal," he said. "A lot of peo-

ple might think it's for the uninsured, but anyone can use it."

About 68 cities in Indiana offer the card program, which launched in July 2009.

There are similar programs in each state, and the card can be used at any of the 56,000 national and regional pharmacies around the country.

"So many people are struggling to pay for their medicines," said Natalie Meyer, program coordinator for Indiana. "Some of the stories are really hard to hear. It's nice to know there's help."

Meyer said the program is not just for the uninsured or

underinsured. New employees waiting for benefits to kick in, and those with high deductibles could also benefit.

The program's parent company, United Networks of America based in Baton Rouge, La., initiated the program in part to encourage people to visit their local pharmacies, rather than buy medicines online, Meyer said.

"There are reasons for shopping locally. First, it keeps pharmacists employed and supports local businesses. But also, your pharmacist can warn you if two drugs won't interact well, and give you other

advice about your drugs. And you know where the drugs are coming from (unlike buying online)," she said. "It's very community oriented."

To use the card, people need to fill in and print a card from the site's homepage, [www.indianadrugcard.com](http://www.indianadrugcard.com). There's also an app for mobile devices.

Meyer said all information is confidential.

"The only person who will see your information is the pharmacist, and he's going to have it anyway," she said.

The program may not benefit everyone, said McWhirter, but, "they can

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take the card along with their insurance card to find out which gives them the better deal."

Meyer said some savings might be, "just \$2 but it all adds up. If you saw \$2 on the ground, wouldn't you pick it up?"

Not all pharmacies charge the same price for the same drug, so it pays to shop around, Meyer said. Indiana's website has a medication pricing page. Type in

the drug name and your ZIP code, and the website will offer a list of pharmacies and an estimate of the cost for that particular drug.

"There's been about \$32 million saved so far," Meyer said.

Meyer encourages people to call her if they need help with the program, or if they have questions.

One can call 317-650-7447 or e-mail her at [Natalie@indru](mailto:Natalie@indru).