

## WHAT ARE GENERIC DRUGS?

A generic drug is chemically identical and bioequivalent to a brand name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics and intended use. Available in both over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription form, generic drugs are a valuable option that allows greater access to healthcare for all Americans. Generic drugs significantly improve adherence in those patients who may not fill a prescription due to the high cost of their medication.

## ARE GENERIC DRUGS AS EFFECTIVE AS NAME BRAND DRUGS?

Federal law requires that companies seeking approval for generic versions of approved drugs must demonstrate that their products are the same as the original name brand drug with respect to active ingredients, high quality, strength, purity, stability, and bioavailability. Health professionals and consumers can be assured that FDA approved generic drugs have met the same rigid standards as the brand-name drug and provide the same health benefits.

## CAN GENERICS DRUGS SAVE YOU MONEY?

Rising prescription drug costs remain a major challenge for consumers, especially older Americans. Although generic drugs are chemically identical to their branded counterparts, they are typically sold at substantial discounts from the branded price. When it comes to price, there is a big difference between generic and name brand drugs. On average, the cost of a generic drug is less than one quarter of the price of a brand drug. For example, a brand-name drug may cost \$40 while the generic equivalent may cost as little as \$8 – keeping more money in your pocket. According to the Congressional Budget Office, generic drugs save consumers an estimated \$8 to \$10 billion a year at retail pharmacies. Even more billions are saved when hospitals use generics.

## TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

Most doctors want to help keep their patient's health care affordable, but you, as the patient, may know more about your prescription drug costs than your physician. There are often several drug options that can be prescribed for your condition. Generic drugs account for far more than half of all prescriptions. If your brand-name drug does not have an equivalent generic drug, ask your doctor if there may be another generic drug available to treat your condition. Additionally, if you use a medication on a long-term basis, you could potentially save more money by ordering a 90- or 180-day supply of a generic drug. Having an open discussion with your physician about your prescription drugs is very important. So use this valuable time at your next appointment to discuss all your medications, including generic drug options that may be right for you.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ✓ Not all branded drugs have a generic equivalent. Brand name drugs are protected by patent for a period of time during which the matching generic equivalent cannot be made.
- ✓ Generic drugs may be packaged differently, may not be the same color, or may not taste the same as the brand equivalent. Those differences have no impact on their health benefits.
- ✓ Patients who are well-controlled on a branded medication MAY be safely and easily switched to a generic medication.

## WHO IS RX OUTREACH?

Rx Outreach is a non-profit organization that provides affordable medications to people in need. Through the Rx Outreach Program, low-income, uninsured patients have access to over 650 prescription medication strengths through our mail order pharmacy. Rx Outreach serves individuals and families whose income is 300% or less of the federal poverty level. Each year we serve over 80,000 people across all fifty states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.