

a series of fact sheets written
by experts in the field of liver
disease

Patient Assistance Programs

Alan Franciscus, Editor-in-Chief

MANY AMERICANS DO NOT HAVE INSURANCE for health-care services and/or prescription coverage. In order to provide free or low cost medicines to those who qualify, patient assistance programs were created by the pharmaceutical industry. In addition to these services some pharmaceutical companies will work with patients to see if the prescription for their drug is covered by the patient's insurance company or other drug plans.

The patient assistance programs also offer other services for people undergoing treatment with their respective medications. Schering and Roche provide services such as a 24 hour nurse on call, motivational information to help patients adhere and stay on the medications as well as various tips on side-effect management. These services can be accessed on the web or by calling the pharmaceutical company (see information below).

Partnership for Prescription Assistance

Partnership for Prescription Assistance was launched in 2005 as a centralized site for help with patient assistance prescription coverage. Pharmaceutical, local and national organizations participate to bring more than 475 public and private patient assistance programs together in one place.

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance was formed because many Americans do not know that they may qualify for free or low-cost medication. A centralized location makes it easier for patients to locate assistance programs. The goal or mission of the Partnership for Prescription Assistance is to bring about more awareness of the patient assistance programs and to help put people in touch with these programs. To find out if you qualify for an assistance program go to the Partnership for Prescription Assistance Web Site <https://www.pparx.org> or call 1-888-477-2669 (toll free) for more information.

To speed up the process, have the following information available:

- Age
- State of residence and zip code
- Estimated gross annual household income
- Number of people living in the household
- Brand name of the prescription medicines that you are currently taking or have been prescribed (Pegasys/Copegus – Roche; PegIntron/Rebetol – Schering)
- Type of health insurance and/or prescription coverage (if any)
- Name and contact information of physician who prescribed or will prescribe the medication.

The people who assist you are specially trained to be courteous and sensitive to the special issues of information related to money and issues surrounding illness. All of the information is strictly confidential.

If it is determined that you may be eligible for a particular program you will be asked to fill out an application. For most people this process is stressful for a variety of reasons so it is highly recommended that you involve a caregiver, social worker, benefits counselor, health-care professional, or friend to help with the initial process and fill out the application. After you fill out the patient information, the application will have to be sent to your medical provider to complete.

Resources:

The pharmaceutical companies that make HCV medications can also be contacted directly:

- Roche – Pegasys plus Copegus (ribavirin): Pegassist Patient Assistance Foundation – 1-877-734-2797
- Schering – PegIntron plus Rebetol (ribavirin): Commitment to Care – 1-800-521-7157

For more information about hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HCV coinfections, please visit www.hcvadvocate.org

• *hcspFACTsheet* •

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HCV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HCV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HCV.

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