

News and Current Events :: Free Lipitor, Viagra, other drugs for jobless

Free Lipitor, Viagra, other drugs for jobless - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/5/14 14:22

It is difficult to imagine that these people are doing this out of the kindness of their hearts.

Free Lipitor, Viagra, other drugs for jobless

by LINDA A. JOHNSON, AP Business Writer

TRENTON, N.J. — Pfizer Inc. says it will provide 70 of its most widely prescribed prescription drugs — including Lipitor and Viagra — for free to people who have lost their jobs and health insurance.

The world's biggest drugmaker said Thursday it will give away the medicines for up to a year to Americans who lost jobs since Jan. 1 and have been on the Pfizer drug for three months or more.

The announcement comes amid massive job losses caused by the recession and a campaign in Washington to rein in health care costs and extend coverage. The move could earn Pfizer some goodwill in that debate after long being a target of critics of drug industry prices and sales practices.

The program also likely will help keep those patients loyal to Pfizer brands.

"Everybody knows now a neighbor, a relative who has lost their job and is losing their insurance. People are definitely hurting out there," Dr. Jorge Puente, Pfizer's head of pharmaceuticals outside the U.S. and Europe and a champion of the project, told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview Wednesday. "Our aim is to help people bridge this point."

The idea for the program came just five weeks ago, at a leadership training meeting, as the workers discussed how many patients are struggling, Puente said.

He said he urged top management to approve the program, presenting a recent Associated Press article about how newly uninsured diabetics are suffering serious complications because they can no longer afford the medicines and testing supplies. Approval came quickly.

"It was my idea," he said. "I floated it, and the reception it got was so dramatic that it very quickly became our idea."

Colleagues suggested employees could donate to a fund to help support the effort, Puente said. He said some employees had tears in their eyes when discussing how they could help people who had lost jobs.

Officials for New York-based Pfizer said they don't know how much the program will cost and haven't put a cap on spending for it.

Applicants will have to sign a statement that they are suffering financial hardship and provide a "pink slip" or similar employer notice. Applications will be accepted through Dec. 31, with medication provided for up to 12 months after approval — or until the person becomes insured again.

Starting Thursday, patients can call a toll-free number, 866-706-2400, to sign up, and those whose drugs are not included in the program will be referred to other company aid programs. Starting July 1, patients can also apply through the Web site, <http://www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com>, which has information about the other Pfizer aid programs.

Pfizer and the rest of the drug industry are trying to have a voice in the debate over how to overhaul the U.S. health care system, partly by joining in a pledge this week to help hold down inflation of health costs.

"There's a long-term benefit there, beyond the goodwill and the publicity," said David Heupel, health care portfolio manager at Thrivent Large Cap Growth Fund. "Pfizer is trying to maintain their (market) share, if not grow their share" by keeping people from switching to generic versions of its drugs to save money.

"If you're already taking medication that's working, typically doctors don't push to change it," Heupel said.

Pfizer's program comes at a time when many drugmakers, including Pfizer, have been raising prices on their drugs, partly to offset declines in revenue as the global recession reduces the number of prescriptions people can afford to fill.

The 70-plus drugs covered in the program include several diabetes drugs and some of Pfizer's top money makers, from cholesterol fighter Lipitor and painkiller Celebrex to fibromyalgia treatment Lyrica and Viagra for impotence. Drugs from several other popular classes such as antibiotics, antidepressants, antifungal treatments, heart medications, contraceptives and smoking cessation products also are included. Cheaper generic versions are available for quite a few of the drugs.

Pfizer said that from 2004 through 2008, its patient assistance programs helped 5.1 million people get 51 million Pfizer prescriptions for free or at reduced cost, with a total value of \$4.8 billion.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/us_pfizer_free_drugs

Re: Free Lipitor, Viagra, other drugs for jobless - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2009/5/14 14:35

Perhaps they are concerned that people will see that they CAN live without their pills.

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/5/14 16:48

As an undergraduate engineering major, I was required to choose between one of two different TI engineering calculators (the TI 89 or the TI 92). My engineering, mathematics and science classes permitted only these for use in class (if and when we were allowed to use it). I never understood why (since there are other less-expensive and less-elaborate calculators for sale). One of my engineering professors explained it to me.

This professor said that the company (Texas Instruments) gave the school cases and cases of calculators to be distributed to the professors. They even came to the school and trained the professors on how to use them. The company sold the calculators to the university bookstores at a substantially discounted rate...which were sold to students at full price (\$140 or more). The reason? The company hoped that aspiring engineers would get used to these calculators...and continue purchasing them after they graduated and moved into full time engineering jobs. Those students who became math and science teachers and professors would probably feel more comfortable using these calculators...which would equate to more sales from their classrooms.

I currently use that same TI calculator for home and work. They have recently created a new model to replace the one that I use...but it is mostly cosmetic. Eventually, I will probably need to purchase a newer model (due to my familiarity with the product).

Of course, I don't know why this company is doing it...but it might just be a "clever" (if somewhat dishonest) marketing strategy. I was wondering why you brought it up. Is there a message that you are trying to get across in all of this?

Thanks!

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/5/14 23:34

Quote:

-----I was wondering why you brought it up. Is there a message that you are trying to get across in all of this?

America is being drugged to death. We have turned away from the great Healer and now rely upon the god of medicine. Almost everyone I know is on prescription drugs. They have these little plastic things all filled up with a daily supply of whatever the doctor has deemed to be necessary - drugs designed to help one endure the side effects of the other drugs that are being taken. The funny thing is that no one seems to be getting any better as the number of pills that are required to get through the day just seems to increase - they never decrease.

Awhile back, my dad, who is on antidepressants asked me how I felt about something because he said he no longer make that determination. Now how is the Lord supposed to work through a life that has been given over to drugs? My dad is depressed because he is not willing to turn to the Lord, but how is he ever going to realize this if he does not have the ability to feel anything?

Why do so many people believe doctors, but not God?

Re: - posted by White_Stone (), on: 2009/5/15 0:34

Dear HeartSong,

My Step-Father just died a month ago. He was nothing but a 'cash cow' to the Drs in his town. He was over medicated to the point of being a Zombie. He died a terrible death and it was sped on by inhumane, incompetent, careless treatment by staff at a so-called rehab center. It was so bad they should be in jail but nothing will be done. The Dr will cover it up and my Mother is not able/willing to face the unpleasantness needed to push for prosecution.

It is by the Grace of God that my husband and myself are not in the clutches of the medical profession. Not that they haven't tried but God saved us.

I pray for my mother and sister but it will only be by God's will that they will turn to Jesus. They believe they are saved. The 'feel good' church they attend tells them what they want to hear, never what they NEED to hear. My sister prays to dead relatives. My Mother believes 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord' includes listening to secular music. When I try to talk to them they shut me down but I can still pray. :-)

I will pray for you and your family, too.

We just were down at my Mothers helping clear up some of the mess in Daddy's office. He had a box with every pay stub he ever received. He was attentive to save worthless paper and not his soul. Such a sad thing.

white stone

Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2009/5/15 0:48

Greetings heartsong

I just wanted to let you that I will be praying for you and your dad. There was a time before I knew the Lord when I was taking a medication for anxiety and it does cause you to stop caring. It almost makes you apathetic about everything. I do know that through much prayer and the faithfulness of those walking in Christ speaking into my life really did help me to see and understand that it was sin I was dealing with and that I needed Jesus not medication. Keep sharing with your dad as the Lord gives you provision to.

God Bless
Maryjane

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/5/15 1:12

Maryjane and white stone,

Thank you, my sisters, for your caring hearts and your prayers - they are much coveted. I have become so keenly aware of the traps of the enemy that it is overwhelming at times - and just when I think I have seen it all, another vice shows forth. We are just like sheep - so easily led astray. Oh what a blessing it is to be beneath the wings of our precious Saviour.

I am sorry to hear about your step-father white stone. It does weigh upon the heart that all that he had to do was to turn to the Lord - but these drugs that are so easily accepted by so many produce such a dense fog that they are locked within the darkness with not concept of the light.

Maryjane, thank you for your testimony. Hearing how others have been set free always bolsters hope.

God bless you both.

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/5/15 13:38

Jeremiah 46:11

. . . in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured.

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/5/15 14:02

Hi HeartSong,

I agree that there is an overuse of some medicines by society. However, are you saying that you are opposed to the use of medicine?

Forgive me if I am misunderstanding your words.

Re: - posted by Tears_of_joy, on: 2009/5/15 20:01

Quote:

However, are you saying that you are opposed to the use of medicine?

Although this question is not directed to me, I would like to give you a hint, that your question is not properly set up.

Please answer me, are you opposed to the use of Death Metal for worshiping and praising God?

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2009/5/15 20:47

Hi Tears...

Quote:

Tears_of_joy wrote:

Although this question is not directed to me, I would like to give you a hint, that your question is not properly set up.

Please answer me, are you opposed to the use of Death Metal for worshiping and praising God?

?

A hint? I don't understand what "death metal" has to do with medicine...or my question. Are you saying that your question is similar to the one that I asked?

Our sister made a statement about medicine...and I asked a question for the purpose of my own clarity (not hers). There are no ulterior motives whatsoever.

Re: - posted by JesusLoves, on: 2009/5/15 20:59

Quote:

Tears_of_joy wrote:

Quote:

However, are you saying that you are opposed to the use of medicine?

Although this question is not directed to me, I would like to give you a hint, that your question is not properly set up.

Please answer me, are you opposed to the use of Death Metal for worshiping and praising God?

What is Death Metal. How is it used to worship and praise God. Never heard about it before.

Re: - posted by JesusLoves, on: 2009/5/17 0:58

Quote:

HeartSong wrote:

Quote:

----- ...Awhile back, my dad, who is on antidepressants asked me how I felt about something because he said he no longer make that determination. Now how is the Lord supposed to work through a life that has been given over to drugs? My dad is depressed because he is not willing to turn to the Lord, but how is he ever going to realize this if he does not have the ability to feel anything? quote

Can you help me find some articles to read so when we believers face situations like this we can taste and see victory. Enough of being helpless like the rest of the world that does not know Jesus. I lost a good friend - she took so many medicines for different ailments. Deep down I that Jesus could heal her-

Re: - posted by HeartSong, on: 2009/5/17 1:28

Quote:

-----JesusLoves wrote:

Can you help me find some articles to read so when we believers face situations like this we can taste and see victory. Enough of being helpless like the rest of the world that does not know Jesus. I lost a good friend - she took so many medicines for different ailments. Deep down I that Jesus could heal her-

You are right of course. It is my own lack of faith that is getting in the way of things. This is when the Lord shines brightly - when His brilliant beam of light breaks through the fog that the enemy has caused to come over the sick and dying. After all, His light broke through my own fog of alcohol, nicotine and caffeine . . .