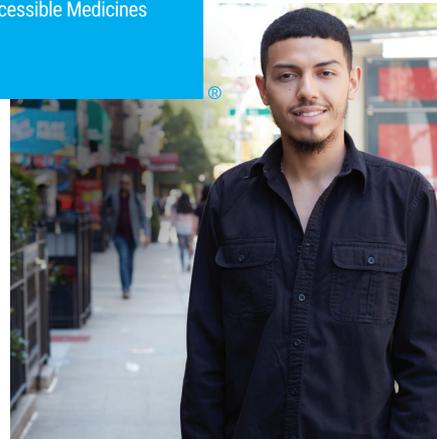
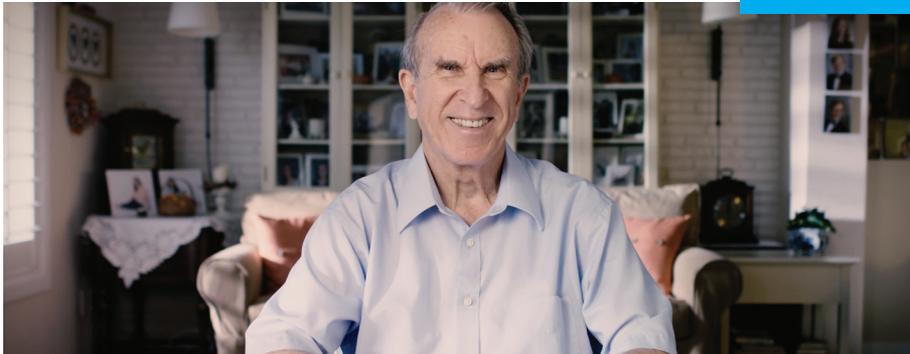


aam
Association for Accessible Medicines

Voices of Access



Affordable. They saved me.

I rely on generics. Without access to generic drugs, I don't know what I'd do.

Effective. Biosimilars gave me my life back!

My meds are affordable.

I used the savings to go back to school. They just work.

So much savings. **I started to feel like me again.**

They're safe. The biosimilar is much easier on my pocketbook.

Generic medications help keep me healthy. **They're affordable.**

I feel great. **Generics saved my life.**

My generics are essential. I feel a hundred times better.

I can afford I'm on a fixed income, and those savings really do add up.

things! Generics lowered my costs.

Don't waste your money on the brand names.

Your Voices, Your Health

In “Voices of Access,” everyday American patients demonstrate the importance of generic and biosimilar medicines in their lives. A full nine out of 10 prescriptions dispensed in the United States, these medicines have made a tremendous difference during the global pandemic, helping health care professionals save the lives of those battling COVID and maintaining the health of millions who rely on them for chronic conditions.

Generics, sterile injectables, complex generics and biosimilars are highly sophisticated products of scientific innovation—and they are more affordable, which translates into access and, ultimately, better health.

Savings from generics and biosimilars allow people like Ariel of New Jersey and Jonnie of Oklahoma to live healthy and more active lives. The patient stories presented here come from all over the nation, representing diverse populations and income levels.

Without these low-cost medicines—92% are filled for \$20 or less—many patients couldn’t adhere to their prescriptions, which can literally make the difference between life and death. Every story is different, but what unites them is the understanding that scientific innovation is important, but it is not enough. Access makes the difference between a drug that works and a drug that works for everybody.

I thank the patients for sharing their powerful stories and invite you and your loved ones to participate in AAM’s ongoing Voices of Access campaign to drive federal and state policies that expand access and improve health.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Leonard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Dan Leonard

CEO, Association for Accessible Medicines



“ We would not have survived [the COVID surge] if not for the paralytics, sedatives and all of the different generic medicines used for placing patients on ventilators in the ICU. ”

Rob Brenner, M.D., MMM

President, Clinical Integration & Physician Enterprise,
Valley Health System

“ A lot of us were very worried that there were going to be shortages of generic drugs. How we avoided that I think speaks to what the generic industry had done in terms of business decisions to make sure there weren't going to be disruptions in the supply chain. ”

Scott Gottlieb, M.D.

Former Commissioner, Food & Drug Administration



“ Generic sedatives, analgesics, steroids, vasoactives and anticoagulants were all absolutely critical to the management of this pandemic. Patients would certainly have died if we did not have access to these medications. ”

Alexandra (Alex) Pratt, M.D.

Chair of the Department of Critical Care,
MedStar Washington Hospital Center

For most of the COVID-19 pandemic, physicians used every treatment tool in their arsenals to save lives, even though the Food and Drug Administration had not yet approved any treatments indicated for COVID. The National Institutes of Health and other research institutions developed treatment guidelines, many of which recommended the use of certain medicines that are available as generics. See: <http://bit.ly/COVID-Guidelines-NIH>.

 **USATODAY.**

**Demand for dexamethasone rises
after study finds COVID-19 benefits,
FDA data shows**

 **REUTERS**

Medication costs for
COVID-19 patients
hospitalized in the
United States have
dropped sharply since
May, reflecting advances
in treatment, shorter
stays and use of cheaper
generic drugs.

The New York Times

*Drug Costs for COVID-19 Patients
Plunge at U.S. Hospitals*

STAT

**Inexpensive steroids reduce deaths of
hospitalized Covid-19 patients, WHO
analysis confirms**



Kyle

50 | Sacramento, CA | COVID-19

As a nursing home administrator, Kyle is normally the caregiver. But last summer, he, like more than two million other Americans, was hospitalized with COVID. With a 103° fever and respiratory failure, Kyle was fighting for his life. One of his nurses “told me I was the sickest COVID patient she had taken care of.” He received oxygen and a cocktail of medications, including a common drug available generically, dexamethasone.

He is “thankful for all the front-line workers that took care of me”—even as he “never could see their face because of PPE masks.” And he is thankful for dexamethasone, which “saved my life for sure.” Though still dealing with the long-term effects of COVID, Kyle notes many of his colleagues and residents died from the virus and acknowledges, “I feel blessed to be here.”



ISSUE COVID-19

Before mass vaccinations in the United States, countless lives were saved by generic medicines, the unsung heroes of the global pandemic. Many of the most critically ill patients were successfully intubated and extubated thanks to the generic medicines used to sedate and control pain, and corticosteroids like dexamethasone had a profound impact on patients in acute respiratory distress.





“ Dexamethesone played an integral part in helping me recover. ”





“ I’ve been able to use the savings to go back to school. ”

Raeanne

33 | New York, NY | Asthma

When people have the foundation of health, they're able to do more, be more and reach their potential. Just ask Raeanne, a single mother of three in New York City. "I take generic medications for asthma," she explains. "I don't have a lot of time or money to spare,

so I tell the doctors to just give me the generic because they work the same, and it's way less than half the cost of the brand-name. I've been able to use the savings to go back to school."



ISSUE

Complex Generics

Despite recent efforts to increase the approval timelines of complex generics—for example, drug-device combination inhalers to treat and control asthma—these products are often slow to gain approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, delaying patient access and savings. Read more: <https://accessiblemeds.org/report-complex-generics>



Eric

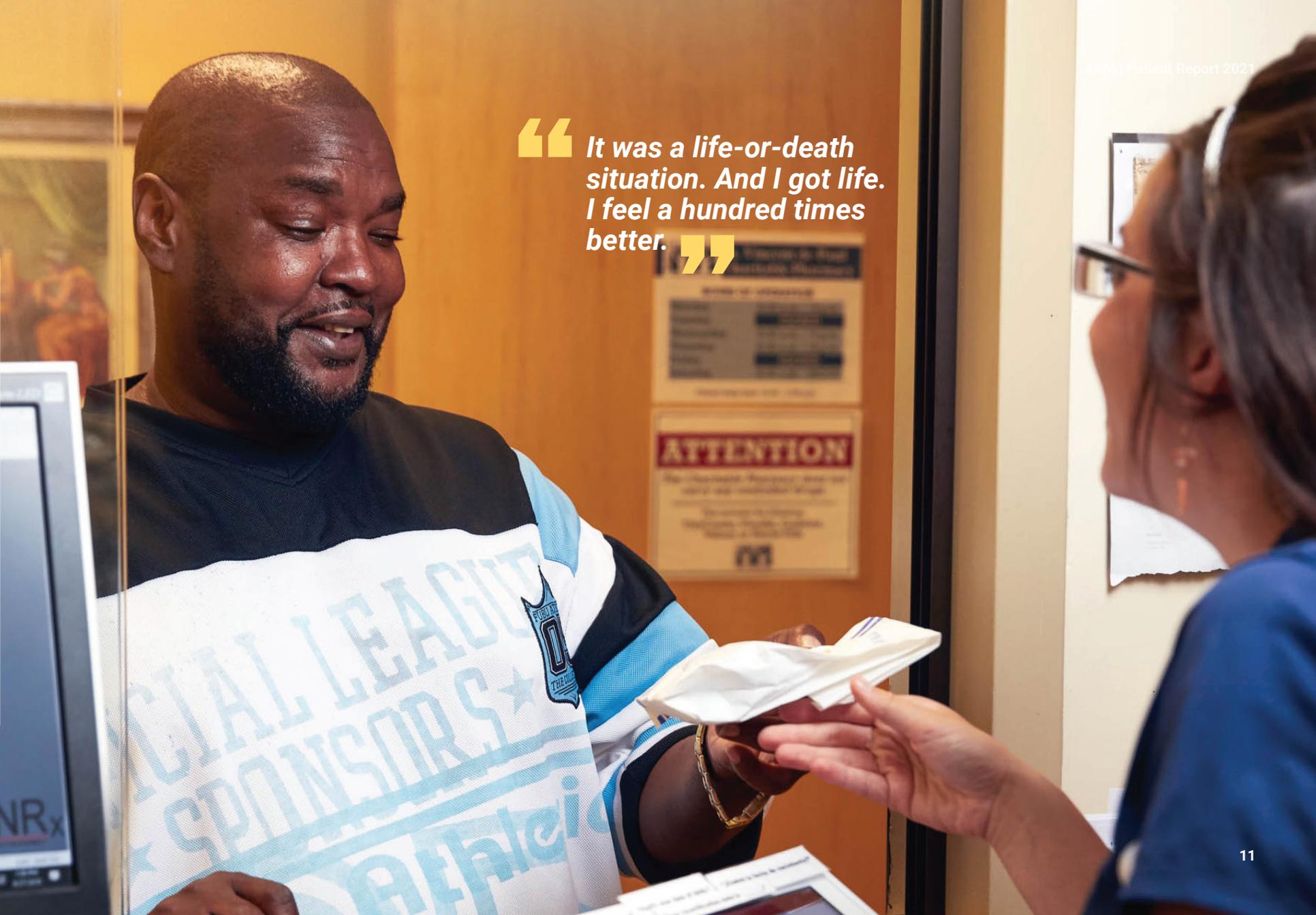
60 | Cincinnati, OH | Diabetes

Eric gets his blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes prescriptions filled at the St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy. Pharmacist Lydia Bailey has seen Eric every month for the past six months, checking that his medicine is working properly and that he's eating right and hitting the gym. His A1C level, which tests diabetes control, has settled from an alarming 11.3% down to the goal value of 7%.

"From my perspective as a pharmacist," says Bailey, "It's a miracle." With his health stabilized, Eric can spend time with his grandchildren as well as care for his aging parents and look for work. "They're nice people to be around," Eric says about the staff at St. Vincent de Paul Charitable Pharmacy. "Every time I come here, I feel welcome."



“ It was a life-or-death situation. And I got life. I feel a hundred times better. ”



“ Without access to generic medicines, I don't know what I'd do. ”





Rich

72 | Laurel, MD | High Blood Pressure

Now that Rich is semi-retired, he loves to go boating on the Chesapeake Bay. His 15-year-old boat is equipped with a diving board to entice the grandchildren. Rich takes a generic drug to control his blood pressure. He and his wife are enrolled in Medicare but not a supplemental plan, so lower-priced generics are his best option.

The brand-name version of his blood pressure drug, for example, costs twice as much as the generic. “That thing sitting in the water is my retirement,” he says. Generic savings means he can cover those boat maintenance bills more easily, and the quality and reliability mean that he can lead a healthier, more productive and fuller life—that is, more time with the grandchildren.





Jeni

35 | Newhall, CA | Pancolitis

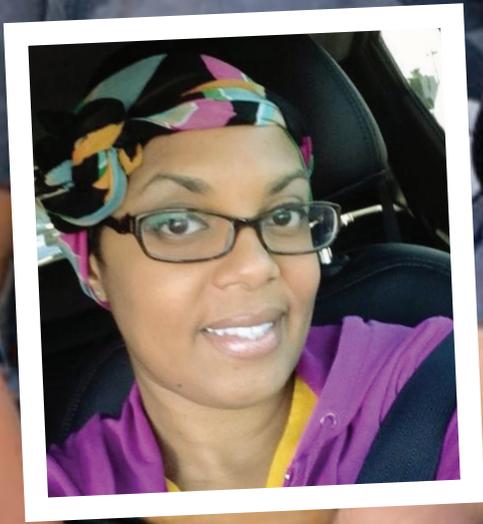
In a suburb of Santa Clarita, California, Jeni recently went back to school to become a medical coder (someone who helps doctors and insurance companies speak the same language), and when she is not online learning she is enjoying everything the state has to offer—hiking, rock climbing and mountain biking with her dog Sally. “If you take me outside, I’m a happy girl,” she says. Illness changed everything.

“Every time I went to the bathroom,” she recalls, “I would lose blood and I couldn’t eat anything. I became anemic, and after my symptoms got even worse, I finally went to the ER, where I received a colonoscopy and was diagnosed with pancolitis. I felt like I had lost everything.” But once the doctor prescribed a biosimilar, Jeni says, “It was like flipping a light switch.”



“ Biosimilars truly gave me my life back! ”





“ I was able to go back to work and my most important roles as a mother and wife. ”

Helen

41 | Winter Springs, FL | Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma

After years of trial and error with several different treatment options that left her feeling debilitated, Helen and her doctor found balance with biosimilars—safe, effective alternatives to brand-name biologics. These life-changing treatment options undergo rigorous FDA testing, review and safety monitoring, allowing patients like Helen access to cutting-edge medicines with confidence.

“Because I have an incurable form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma,” Helen says, “I know my medication journey will continue. It is nice to know that when I need a biosimilar again, it will be there for me.” For Helen, this is a lifelong battle, but thanks to biosimilars, she can get back to living her life to the fullest and be there for her family.



ISSUE

Biosimilar Access

Biosimilars provide an average cost savings of 30% compared to the price of the brand-name biologic. Despite the cost savings, the use of biosimilar medicines has trailed expectations. Incentives are needed to increase biosimilars development and adoption, allowing millions more Americans to experience healthier lives. Read more: <https://biosimilarscouncil.org>

Akaimi

44 | San Antonio, TX | Leukemia

As a single mother, a new grandmother and emerging artist, Akaimi has an active and creative lifestyle. Her treatment for large granular lymphocytic leukemia was successful, and the cancer is now in remission, but she continues to have side effects from the chemo treatments. Her doctor recommended a biosimilar.

“Not only did it work, but it saves me money too!” Akaimi says. “My copay is only \$25. Now I have the energy and extra money to attend my art exhibits, respond to my Instagram fans and care for my family.” Savings from biosimilars for patients like Akaimi are projected to grow to \$54 billion over the next 10 years.

“ The biosimilar is much easier on my pocketbook. ”



“ I’m on a fixed income,
and those savings really
add up. ”



Michelle

58 | Stroudsburg, PA | Anxiety

Before COVID, Michelle realized a lifelong dream and traveled to Machu Picchu and the Galapagos. If it weren't for her low-cost generics, she would not have been able to afford the trip.

"Financially, I cut corners wherever possible," she says. "But not on my health. I always ask my doctor if the generic of a medicine is okay for me, and he always says yes."

"Not that I take his word for it—after all, I'm a librarian, and if I can do anything, it's research." Depression and anxiety are among the most common conditions treatable with FDA-approved generic prescription drugs. Generics have saved patients \$339 billion over the past 10 years.



Jonnie

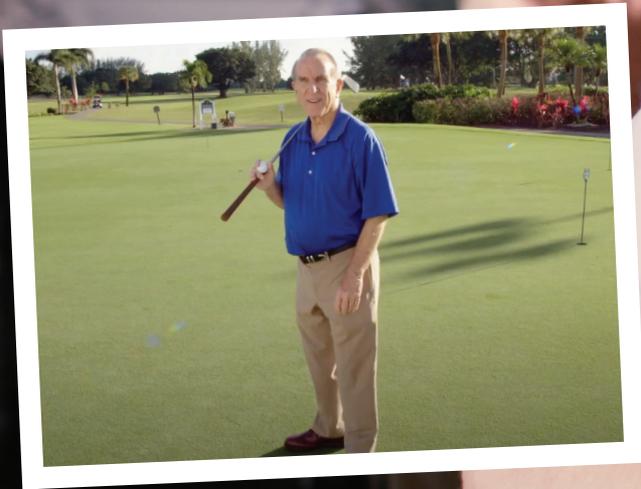
57 | Skiatook, OK | Mitral Valve Prolapse

Just up the road from Tulsa, Skiatook—population 7,397—holds a Pioneer Day festival and rodeo every fall. Skiatook’s Antique Depot attracts treasure hunters from all over the region. Jonnie has had a booth there for 25 years. Holding estate sales and dealing in used merchandise allows her a flexible enough schedule to take care of her elderly mother, who lives next door.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. FDA-approved generic cardiac drugs help patients like Jonnie live longer, fuller lives. Generics have saved patients with heart disease \$327.8 billion over the past 10 years. Access to generics makes all the difference to patients like her. “When you pay for a name brand, it’s super expensive,” says Jonnie. “[Do] you know what it’s like to have a drug that costs your car payment each month?”

“ If it weren't for these generic medications, I don't know where my life would be. ”





“ Those generic savings really come in handy. ”

Doug

74 | Pembroke Pines, FL | High Cholesterol

Doug was taking a brand-name drug to control his cholesterol, but after his insurance company discontinued coverage, his doctor recommended the generic. "It's done everything that the brand-name drug did," Doug says, "plus it's much cheaper. Those generic savings have really come in handy, because I've been able to help my grandchildren with their college savings."

Doug isn't the only Florida senior saving with generics. In 2019, the use of safe, effective and affordable generic medicines saved Florida's patients and taxpayers \$19.1 billion, including \$6.9 billion in Medicare savings and \$1.9 billion in Medicaid savings.



ISSUE

Market Sustainability

Current patient access to generic medicines masks the underlying fragility that's threatening the sustainability of the U.S. generics and biosimilars industry. Safeguarding market sustainability today means continued access tomorrow.

Read more: <https://secureourmeds.org>



Ariel

29 | Bloomfield, NJ | Leukemia

Ariel was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia and had to endure three years of chemotherapy. “In the beginning of my regimen,” she recalls, “the doctors gave me tons of pills and infusions designed to kill the cancer, which subsequently weakened my immune system and depleted my energy.” For a time, she could barely walk or talk. After her intensive therapy, Ariel immediately began outpatient maintenance, which meant taking six to 10 pills a day, in addition to daily infusions.

“If I didn’t have generic prescriptions, I probably wouldn’t be here,” she says, “because the brand-name drugs are expensive—sometimes over \$200 a bottle. Luckily, my mother’s a pharmacist and pushed away any initial fears I may have had about generic medications.” Ariel has now completed her treatment and is “on my way to being declared cured.”

“ I’m a cancer thriver! ”



“ I have ulcerative colitis, and without my generic drugs, which I take every day and every night, I would literally die. ”



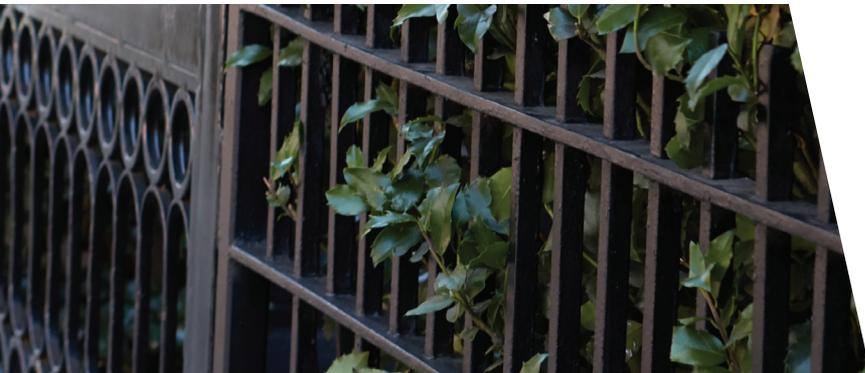


Keon

26 | New York, NY | Ulcerative Colitis

As a hip-hop performer, Keon stays busy all over the city at all hours of the day and night. “There are events almost every weekend,” he says, “and it’s so important to stay healthy.” Keon’s ulcerative colitis threatened to curtail his nonstop activities, but medication has the condition under control.

“Without my generic drugs, which I take every day and every night, I would literally die,” he reports. “Generics help me lead a normal life, and I’m able to play my music—to record and tour and do what I love to do.” According to Keon, if he had to pay for the brand name, he couldn’t afford to live in New York City. Generics keep the music playing.



Rich

75 | Trumbull, CT | Hypothyroid

After a long career in corporate communications, Rich considers himself semi-retired now. A father of four and grandfather of eight, he likes to stay active and healthy so he can enjoy his favorite things in life. And besides family, Rich's favorite things is food—eating and writing about food. Luckily, Trumbull has dozens of Italian restaurants.

Medicare—the federal health insurance program for people who are 65 or older—pays for some but not all of Rich's health care expenses, including the generic medicine for his common thyroid condition. Unfortunately, nearly one-third of generics approved between 2016 and 2018 did not launch, depriving seniors like Rich of access to the next generation of lower-priced generic medicines.



ISSUE

Seniors Pay Too Much for Their Medicines

To read more about Medicare Part D and policy recommendations to improve access to affordable medicines, read our report *Access Denied: Why New Generics Are Not Reaching America's Seniors*: <https://accessiblemeds.org/access-denied>

“ My meds are affordable now, but what if a better treatment comes on the market and I can’t afford it? ”



“ Without generic medicine, I probably wouldn't even be able to put gas in my tank. ”





McKenzie

24 | Salt Lake City, UT | Anxiety

McKenzie lives at home with her parents. She works full time as a receptionist at a chocolate factory, and in her spare time she performs aerial acrobatics on hanging silk fabric. She likens the activity to “dancing in the air.” Generic prescription drugs help McKenzie cope with anxiety and seasonal affective disorder, and they help her save money, too. “I’m just slowly paying off my student loans,” she says.

“My medications are very essential. I’m pretty much living paycheck to paycheck, and without generic medicine, I probably wouldn’t even be able to put gas in my tank.” Four billion generic prescriptions are dispensed every year in the United States, and because the average copay for a generic prescription is \$6.97, when patients like McKenzie come to the pharmacy counter, they are able to walk away with the medicines they and their family need.



Share Your Voice

Health care matters to us all. Medicines, whether you or a loved one take them, are essential to maintaining our health or treating an illness. AAM encourages patients like you to advocate at the federal and state level for accessible prescription drugs using the hashtag **#VoicesofAccess**.

Your voice and your stories do make a difference to policymakers and regulators.

Share your story here:

<https://accessiblemeds.org/share-your-story>



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Association for Accessible Medicines



**Biosimilars
Council**

accessiblemeds.org