

# BBB Alert: Bureau Of Prescription Health, Free Medicine Foundation Charge For 'Free' Services

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**St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 24, 2012** – The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is advising consumers to avoid doing business with Missouri-based **Bureau of Prescription Health**, which charges consumers \$10 per prescription to help them apply for free or low-cost medications.

Based on BBB research, several organizations and many pharmaceutical companies offer the same assistance for free.

A consumer from Connecticut said marketing materials from the Doniphan, Mo., business implied that she could save money on her 13 prescriptions. After paying the company \$130 and sending in the applications, she received nothing. She said she asked the company for a refund and was denied. "It's pretty disgusting," she said. "I've told everyone to stay away from them."



The Bureau of Prescription Health ([www.freemedicine.com](http://www.freemedicine.com)) appears to have taken over the work of **Free Medicine Foundation**, a company formerly headed by **Cynthia K. Randolph**. The Missouri secretary of state revoked Free Medicine's registration in May 2010 for failure to file an annual report. Three months later, Randolph registered **Bureau of Prescription Help** under her married name, **Cindy Haynes**.

Haynes' husband, **Charles Haynes** of Doniphan, registered Bureau of Prescription Health—a slightly different name—in September 2011. Charles Haynes is listed as president, secretary and the lone director of Bureau of Prescription Health.

Bureau of Prescription Health and Free Medicine Foundation have "F" grades with the BBB, the lowest grade possible, due to unanswered complaints and a pattern of complaints. Combined, the firms have more than 70 complaints with the BBB in the last 36 months.

Michelle Corey, BBB president and CEO, said consumers should be skeptical of online advertising from the Bureau of Prescription Health claiming that that the company can help get them free or low cost medicines.

"Consumers need to understand that they don't have to pay \$20, \$50 or more simply to determine whether they qualify for these assistance programs," Corey said. "They can get the same information and the same application papers without paying anything."

Three years ago, the BBB and the Missouri attorney general's office warned the public about Free Medicine Foundation after dozens of consumers from across the nation claimed they paid the business but received nothing.

In October 2008, the BBB warned that the business was not a charitable foundation, as its name implied, but rather a for-profit business, and suggested the name had the capacity to mislead the public.

In December 2008, Free Medicine Foundation and Cynthia Randolph signed an agreement with the attorney general's office, promising to pay \$10,000 in restitution and legal costs, drop the word foundation from its name and make refunds to consumers unable to receive prescription help.

Company officials did not respond to BBB requests for information.

A 67-year-old retiree from Bollingbrook, Ill., told the BBB that she saw the company's online advertisement in September. The ad indicated she could get free or reduced price medications if she earned less than \$43,000 a year. After paying the company \$30 and receiving the application forms, she said she learned that the earnings limit was half of what the company had told her and that she did not qualify for any savings. "I was extremely angry and hurt that they would do something like this to somebody on a fixed income," she said. She said she tried to get a refund, but was refused.

A woman from Warsaw, Ky., said she learned she did not qualify after paying the Bureau of Prescription Health \$50. She described the program as "worthless."

A woman from Carlin, Nev., said she paid the company \$140 for help in applying for 13 medications, but ended up receiving no

discounts on any of them. When she complained, she said a company representative told her, “that’s the chance you take.”

“I was gypped out of my money and I am sure there were thousands of other people,” she said.

The BBB offers the following tips for consumers searching for help in reducing the costs of their prescriptions:

- Instead of paying someone to help reduce your prescription costs, consider contacting the pharmaceutical company or companies directly, or seek help from any of several groups that assist consumers at no cost. Such organizations include the national Partnership for Prescription Assistance, Mid-East Area Agency on Aging serving seniors in St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin and Jefferson counties and the Catholic Charities’ MedAssist Program in Madison County, Ill.
- Be wary of any company charging a fee to help you with the application process.
- Read offers carefully. Is there a refund policy if you are not satisfied with the service? Exactly what services will you be receiving?
- Obtain [BBB Business Reviews](#) by going to [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or by calling 314-645-3300.

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