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Bugged NYers took Cipro in droves

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ALBANY — Scared New Yorkers turned en masse to Cipro to ward off potential anthrax cases, the association representing the state's HMOs says in a new report.

Though actual anthrax exposure was limited, 32,000 New Yorkers statewide — including Gov. Pataki — received some sort of treatment, raising concerns about over-utilization and inappropriate use of antibiotics.

In the Big Apple, Cipro treatments of less than two weeks jumped by more than 60 percent between September and October, according to the Health Plan Association report.

Prescriptions of longer than two weeks skyrocketed by 434 percent during the same period, the association says.

HPA spokeswoman Leslie Moran says the report's numbers are actually conservative because they cover just 11 of 23 HMOs and do not factor in prescriptions covered by non-HMOs, Medicare and Medicaid.

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