

5904-S

Sponsor(s): Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Deccio, Thibaudeau, Winsley, Franklin, Parlette, Keiser, Brandland, Benton, Carlson, Hale, Johnson, Kline, McAuliffe, McCaslin, Mulliken, Oke, Rasmussen, West, Finkbeiner, Kohl-Welles, Shin, Stevens, Esser, B. Sheldon and Hewitt)

Brief Description: Concerning prescription drug assistance programs for seniors.

SB 5904-S.E - DIGEST

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 3/17/03)

Declares an intent to develop programs to provide prescription drugs at an affordable price to those in need, and increase public awareness regarding their safe and cost-effective use.

Requires the Washington institute for public policy to report to the appropriate committees of the legislature by November 15, 2003, on the projected five-year costs, benefits, enrollment levels, and implications for other state-funded medicaid services of a medicaid waiver program that would provide prescription drug benefits to persons aged sixty-five and older who would not otherwise be eligible for medicaid. The department shall actively cooperate and assist the institute in preparation of this report.

Requires the report to assess at least three alternative benefit designs, involving differing enrollee premium levels, point-of-service cost-sharing arrangements, and deductible levels.

Directs the health care authority to implement a program whereby it negotiates with prescription drug manufacturers for price discounts, comparable to those preferred prices it negotiates for its own purchases, to be available to any Washington resident: (1) Whose family income does not exceed two hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty level as adjusted for family size and determined annually by the federal department of health and human services;

(2) Who does not otherwise have insurance that provides prescription drug coverage; and

(3) Who is: (a) At least fifty years old; or (b) between the ages of nineteen and forty-nine and is otherwise eligible for benefits under Title II of the social security act, federal old age, survivors, and disability insurance benefits.

Provides that this program will be terminated within twelve months after implementation of a prescription drug benefit under Title XVIII of the social security act, or by June 30, 2009.

Requires the administrator to charge participants in this program a reasonable annual enrollment fee to offset the cost of program administration.

Declares that the price discounts available pursuant to this act shall not be at the expense of retail pharmacies.

Provides that this program will be terminated within twelve months after implementation of a prescription drug benefit under Title XVIII of the social security act, or by June 30, 2009.

Requires the administrator to establish and advertise a

pharmacy connection program through which health care providers and members of the public can obtain information about manufacturer-sponsored prescription drug assistance programs.

Requires each of the state's area agencies on aging to implement a program intended to inform and train persons sixty-five years and older in the safe and appropriate use of prescription and nonprescription medications.

Provides that, by January 1, 2005, the administrator of the health care authority and the director of the department of social and health services shall submit to the governor and the legislature a progress report regarding the implementation of the programs created in this act.