

ENROLLED SENATE
RESOLUTION NO. 12

By: Dunlap

A Resolution urging Congress to enact certain outpatient prescription drug coverage benefit program as part of a comprehensive reform of the federal Medicare program; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, the use of prescription drugs represents a quality of life issue for many Oklahomans in that prescription drug therapy often makes it possible for people to live healthier, longer, and more productive lives; and

WHEREAS, since enactment of the federal Medicare program, only two-thirds of the Medicare population receives some form of prescription drug coverage, leaving one-third of Medicare beneficiaries with very little, if any, coverage at all; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress failed to enact a prescription drug benefit program as part of Medicare, thus leaving many, including the elderly and disabled populations, without access to appropriate drug therapy treatment and preventing these persons from being able to purchase prescription drugs at an affordable cost; and

WHEREAS, because Congress has failed to enact comprehensive Medicare reform, states must use limited resources to help seniors and disabled persons with prescription drug coverage. The Congressional Budget Office and the United States Department of Health and Human Services have estimated that there are tens of thousands of Medicare beneficiaries in Oklahoma who rely on the state Medicaid program for prescription drug benefits; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that if Congress were to enact a Medicare prescription drug benefit, it would generate a savings of almost \$76,000,000 in state Medicaid funds over a seven-year period beginning in 2005; and

WHEREAS, the current national and state fiscal crisis necessitates implementation of effective programs such as a prescription drug benefit program in order to assist Medicare recipients and others to gain access to needed prescription drugs. In 2001, programs such as the pharmaceutical industry's patient assistance programs served more than 78,000 Oklahoma patients.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 49TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate urges Congress to enact a financially sustainable outpatient prescription drug coverage program that includes, but is not limited to, privately administered outpatient prescription drug coverage as part of a comprehensive reform of the federal Medicare program.

THAT copies of this resolution be distributed to each member of the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation.

Adopted by the Senate the 1st day of April, 2003.

Presiding Officer of the Senate