ENGROSSED SENATE
BILL NO. 690

By: Paddack, Lawler, Adelson, Gumm, Coffee and Leftwich of the Senate

and

Steele of the House

[poor persons - prescription drug assistance programs -

effective date]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY Section 2, Chapter 337, O.S.L. 2002 (56 O.S. Supp. 2004, Section 1010.22), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1010.22 A. The Department of Human Services shall establish a program through which health care providers and members of the public can obtain information about manufacturer-sponsored prescription drug assistance programs and shall provide such information to pharmacies, physicians and other appropriate health care providers, and to the general public. The Department shall ensure that the program has staff available who can, at a minimum:

1. Determine whether a pharmaceutical program is offered for the drug or drugs;

2. Determine whether a person is eligible for assistance through a pharmaceutical program; and

3. Assist a person to make application to and enroll in a pharmaceutical assistance program.

B. Initial implementation of the program shall target senior citizens and shall utilize the existing toll-free Senior Info-Line telephone number for senior citizen services.

C. The Department shall implement additional strategies, subject to available resources and the recommendations of the Oklahoma Pharmacy Connection Council, to improve access to prescription drugs for citizens who have no or inadequate health insurance or other resources for the purchase of medically necessary prescription drugs.

D. The Department shall encourage public or private nonprofit agencies to provide services that improve information about and access to prescription drug assistance programs available through pharmaceutical manufacturers and the federal government.

E. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce shall make funding available to Community Action Agencies in this state that have, or that develop in the future, programs that provide prescription assistance services.

F. Community Action Agencies that receive such funding shall:

1. Maintain a dedicated telephone line and computer with Internet access with appropriate software during normal business hours; and

2. Have staff available who, at a minimum, can:

a. develop and implement community awareness about prescription assistance services offered by the Community Action Agency,

b. determine whether a pharmaceutical program is offered for the drug or drugs a person needs,

c. determine whether a person is eligible for assistance through a pharmaceutical program,

d. assist a person to make application to and enroll in a pharmaceutical assistance program,

e. keep accurate records of the number of clients served,

f. maintain the confidentiality of all client information including, but not limited to, the client's identity, application information and other records, and

g. estimate the value of prescriptions provided to clients under the program.

G. The Department may apply for and accept grants or gifts and may enter into contracts with other state agencies or private organizations to assist with the implementation of the Oklahoma Pharmacy Connection Program including, but not limited to, contracts, gifts or grants from pharmaceutical manufacturers to assist with the direct costs of the program, and take such other action as necessary and appropriate to accomplish the purposes of and implement the provisions of the Oklahoma Pharmacy Connection Program.

~~E.~~ H. The Department of Human Services shall notify pharmaceutical companies doing business in Oklahoma of the Oklahoma Pharmacy Connection Program. Any pharmaceutical company that does business in this state and that offers a pharmaceutical assistance program shall notify the Department of Human Services of the existence of the program, the drugs covered by the program, and all information necessary to apply for assistance under the program.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2005.

Passed the Senate the 14th day of March, 2005.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the ____ day of _____, 2005.

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Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives