

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6660

As of February 2, 2000

Title: An act relating to assisting eligible persons to pay for prescription drugs.

Brief Description: Creating the Washington prescription drug payment assistance program.

Sponsors: Senators Deccio, Thibaudeau, Gardner, Patterson, Winsley, Prentice, Costa and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/3/2000.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Jinnah Rose-McFadden (786-7444)

Background: As the costs of prescription drugs rise, there are concerns that many people who rely on prescription drugs to remain healthy are prohibited, by cost, from purchasing necessary medications. Pharmaceutical assistance programs have been used by many states to alleviate this problem. However, no such program is currently available in Washington State.

Summary of Bill: The Washington drug payment assistance program is created, providing eligible recipients with access to affordable prescription drugs.

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is responsible for administering the program and adopting rules. DSHS must create a state rebate program and develop a rebate system. Only those drugs that are included within the rebate program are included in the drug payment assistance program.

It is mandated that particular elements be included in any rules adopted, such as an annual payment assistance cap, required co-payments, and a defined scope of coverage. Other elements are discretionary, such as the setting of an annual fee.

DSHS must maintain data and evaluate the cost and effectiveness of the program. An annual report must be provided to the Legislature, summarizing demographics and utilization.

A prescription assistance account is created in the state treasury. Expenditures from the account may only be used to cover the program's administrative costs.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

