

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6504

As of February 2, 2004

Title: An act relating to qualifying for prescription drug discounts negotiated by the health care authority.

Brief Description: Qualifying for prescription drug discounts negotiated by the health care authority.

Sponsors: Senators Brown, Swecker, Thibaudeau, B. Sheldon, Kohl-Welles and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/3/04.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Staff: Jonathan Seib (786-7427)

Background: Legislation passed in 2003 directed the Health Care Authority, in negotiating prescription drug price discounts for state agencies, to also negotiate such discounts for any Washington resident who is at least 50, or between 19-49 and disabled, whose family income does not exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty level and whose existing prescription drug need is not covered by insurance. Applications for this discount program are scheduled to be available in April, 2004.

In a number of communities around the state, efforts are underway to systematically engage local physicians, hospitals and pharmacists in charity care that assures access to treatment for low-income, medically underserved persons in the area. It is suggested that these efforts, organized under the name "Project Access" and modeled after similar efforts in other states, would benefit from inclusion in the states prescription drug discount program.

Summary of Bill: The Health Care Authority also negotiates prescription drug discounts for any person who is enrolled in an entity organized as a nonprofit for the purpose of providing charity health care services to any uninsured individual whose family income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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