



House of Representatives

File No. 833

General Assembly

January Session, 2005

(Reprint of File No. 112)

Substitute House Bill No. 6854
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
June 3, 2005

AN ACT CONCERNING INFORMATION RELATING TO PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND DISCOUNT DRUG CARDS OF PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) As used in this section and
2 section 2 of this act:

3 (1) "Eligible person" means any person who is a resident of
4 Connecticut at the time such person files an application for
5 prescription medications or nonprescription medications with a
6 participating manufacturer;

7 (2) "Department" means the Department of Social Services;

8 (3) "Participating manufacturer" means a pharmaceutical
9 manufacturer that offers prescription medications or nonprescription
10 medications at a reduced cost or at no cost to persons pursuant to a
11 voluntary drug assistance program established by such manufacturer;

12 (4) "Prescription medications" means prescription drugs that have

13 been approved as safe and effective by the federal Food and Drug
14 Administration or that are otherwise legally marketed and
15 manufactured in the United States and manufactured and offered by
16 pharmaceutical companies.

17 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a
18 Pharmacy Outreach Program, administered by participating
19 manufacturers through a toll-free telephone number, for the purpose
20 of assisting residents of this state in obtaining reduced cost or no cost
21 prescription medications or nonprescription medications from
22 participating manufacturers and educating such residents about all
23 available programs in Connecticut relating to such medications. The
24 department, within available appropriations, shall oversee such
25 program.

26 (b) The Pharmacy Outreach Program shall assist eligible persons in
27 procuring free or low cost prescription medications or nonprescription
28 medications by: (1) Evaluating the likelihood that such eligible person
29 will qualify to receive reduced cost or no cost prescription medications
30 or nonprescription medications from a participating manufacturer
31 based upon such participating manufacturer's eligibility requirements
32 for participation in such manufacturer's voluntary drug assistance
33 program; (2) aiding eligible persons who qualify to receive such
34 reduced cost or no cost prescription medications or nonprescription
35 medications in receiving such medications from such participating
36 manufacturers; and (3) assisting any physician licensed in this state
37 with communications to any such participating manufacturer that
38 concern the application of any such eligible person for participation in
39 such participating manufacturer's voluntary drug assistance program.

40 (c) The Pharmacy Outreach Program shall: (1) Create and maintain a
41 state-wide toll free telephone number staffed by individuals who are
42 qualified to advise eligible persons on questions such persons may
43 have about access to reduced cost or no cost prescription drugs or
44 nonprescription drugs; (2) sponsor and organize materials and
45 information, in conjunction with other organizations, concerning

46 issues relating to access to affordable prescription medications; and (3)
 47 offer and provide information on prescription medications and
 48 nonprescription medications, including, but not limited to, information
 49 on drug interactions and drug abuse.

50 (d) Not later than January 15, 2006, and annually thereafter, upon
 51 the request of the joint standing committees of the General Assembly
 52 having cognizance of matters relating to human services and general
 53 law, the Department of Social Services shall report, in accordance with
 54 section 11-4a of the general statutes, on the number of telephone calls
 55 received by the Pharmacy Outreach Program, the number of
 56 prescriptions requested and issued through the program and any other
 57 information relating to the program that the department deems
 58 relevant.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect
Department of Social Services	GF - Uncertain

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill as amended makes “participating manufacturers” responsible for the administration of a new Pharmacy Outreach Program. The Department of Social Services (DSS) must oversee this program. As it is unclear how such manufacturers would administer this program, nor what the DSS oversight requirements entail, the fiscal impact cannot be determined.

House “A” changes the entity responsible for the administration of the new program from the University of Connecticut to participating manufacturers, with oversight by DSS. This eliminated the fiscal impact for UConn.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6854 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING INFORMATION RELATING TO PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND DISCOUNT DRUG CARDS OF PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES**SUMMARY:**

This bill establishes the Pharmacy Outreach Program administered by participating manufacturers through a toll-free number. The program is to (1) help state residents obtain reduced or no-cost medicine from participating manufacturers and (2) educate residents about programs available in Connecticut relating to such medicine. The bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS), within available appropriations, to oversee the program.

*House Amendment "A" changes the original bill (File 112) in several ways, including (1) transferring the program from the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy, (2) narrowing the program's responsibility to advise callers, and (3) requiring DSS to report on the program if requested by the committees of cognizance.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

OBTAINING FREE OR REDUCED COST MEDICINE

The program must help residents obtain free or low-cost prescription or nonprescription medicine by (1) evaluating the likelihood that a resident will qualify to receive reduced-cost or no-cost prescription or nonprescription medicine from a participating manufacturer based on each manufacturer's eligibility requirements for their voluntary drug assistance programs, (2) helping qualified residents to receive them, and (3) helping state-licensed physicians communicate with participating manufacturers about applications for assistance.

PROGRAM DUTIES

The bill requires the program to (1) establish a statewide toll-free

telephone number staffed by individuals qualified to advise residents on questions concerning access to reduced or no-cost medicine; (2) sponsor and organize materials and information, in conjunction with other organizations, about access to affordable prescription medicine; and (3) offer and give medication information, including information about drug interaction and abuse.

REPORT

The bill requires DSS, if requested by the General Law and Human Services committees, to report by January 15, 2006 and annually thereafter on (1) the number of telephone calls received, (2) the number of prescriptions requested and issued through the program, and (3) anything else DSS deems relevant.

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the bill to the Appropriations (April 5), Public Health (April 26), Higher Education and Employment Advancement (May 3), and Human Services (May 25) committees. All reported the bill favorably without change on April 21, April 28, May 10, and May 31, respectively.

COMMITTEE ACTION

General Law Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute
Yea 15 Nay 0

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 46 Nay 4

Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 20 Nay 3

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 12 Nay 6

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Report
Yea 11 Nay 4