

REVENUE: No revenue impact
FISCAL: Fiscal statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 4 - 0 - 1
Yeas: Monnes Anderson, Telfer, Verger, Morrisette
Nays: 0
Exc.: Kruse
Prepared By: Jennifer Kellar, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 2/2, 2/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Repeals Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program established in the Department of Human Services.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Subsidizing the purchase of prescription drug coverage by Department of Human Services was never funded or implemented
- Requirement that the Department provide discount card program to enrollees by buy prescriptions at discount rate
- Elimination of “outdated” program, since other options now existing to serve seniors
- Enrollment in program never exceeded 300 seniors out of an estimated 100,000 eligible
- Department will facilitate transition of three seniors currently enrolled to the Oregon Prescription Drug Assistance Program
- Subsequent to public hearing on February 2nd, there has been a reduction from three to two the number of enrollees participating in Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: The 2001 Legislative Assembly enacted the Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program to provide prescription drug assistance for people 65 years of age or older with incomes 185 percent or less of the federal poverty level who have no other prescription drug coverage. The law allows the Department of Human Services (DHS) to subsidize the purchase of prescription drugs on a sliding scale based upon the person’s income, and also requires DHS to issue an enrollment card that permits individuals to purchase their prescription drugs at the Medicaid rate from pharmacies that enroll with the Department and agree to provide the prescription drugs at that discounted rate. Participating seniors must pay an annual fee of up to \$50 for the card, which is dedicated to pay for the administration of the program.

Since implementation of the program, alternative options have become available for seniors. Medicare Part D now provides a prescription drug benefit for Medicare recipients. Those who receive this benefit are not eligible for the Senior Prescription Drug Assistance Program. Another option for seniors is the Oregon Prescription Drug Program, which is a bulk purchasing program and available to the same population, without requiring a fee to join.

Current enrollment in the program is two seniors.

The program is funded through DHS with Other Funds (client fees) only and federal matching funds are not available.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.