

CHAPTER 297**(SCR 185)**

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION directing the Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare to establish a subcommittee to study issues related to prescription drug coverage for seniors.

WHEREAS, prescription drug expenditures increased by 17% during 1999 and are expected to continue to increase at 15-18% annually; and

WHEREAS, Americans ages 65 and older pay an average of \$1,205 a year for prescription medications, up from \$559 in 1992; and

WHEREAS, over 158,000 Kentucky seniors do not have prescription drug coverage; and

WHEREAS, Medicare, the primary payor of health coverage for seniors, does not cover prescription drugs; and

WHEREAS, approximately 27 percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not have prescription drug coverage; and

WHEREAS, most Medicare beneficiaries use pharmaceuticals on a regular basis, filling about 22 prescriptions on average in 1998; and

WHEREAS, Medicare beneficiaries without drug coverage average about eight fewer prescriptions per year than those with coverage, and those with poor health average about 15 fewer prescriptions than those with coverage; and

WHEREAS, prescription drugs positively affect health outcomes and result in decreased utilization of other more expensive health services, including emergency room utilization and hospitalization; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the seniors of Kentucky to explore options to enhance access to prescription drug coverage;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the House of Representatives concurring therein:

Section 1. The Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare is directed to establish a subcommittee to study issues relating to prescription drug coverage for seniors. The study shall include but not be limited to the following:

- (1) Explore various options to promote access to prescription drug coverage for seniors, including but not limited to state funded programs, Medicaid expansions, insurance subsidies, discount programs, bulk purchasing programs, and insurance subsidies;
- (2) Analysis of other states' senior prescription drug programs;
- (3) Identification of funding sources for prescription drug coverage for seniors; and
- (4) Discussion of federal proposals to fund prescription drug coverage for seniors.

Section 2. The subcommittee shall consist of the following members:

- (1) The co-chairs of the Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare. The co-chairs, or his or her respective designee, shall serve as co-chairs of the subcommittee; and

- (2) Three members of the Senate and three members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Legislative Research Commission from a list recommended by the co-chairs of the Interim Joint Committee on Health and Welfare.

Section 3. The subcommittee shall invite representatives from governmental agencies and interested parties to provide input into the study, including but not limited to representation from the following:

- (1) Kentucky Association of Health Plans;
- (2) Kentucky Association of Gerontology;
- (3) American Association of Retired Persons, Kentucky State Office;
- (4) Kentucky Pharmacists Association;
- (5) Special Advisory Commission of Senior Citizens;
- (6) Kentucky Medical Association;
- (7) Office on Aging Services;
- (8) Department for Medicaid Services;
- (9) Long-term care ombudsman;
- (10) Kentucky Coalition of Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives; and
- (11) Kentucky Hospital Association.

Section 4. The subcommittee shall submit a final report to the Legislative Research Commission no later than November 1, 2002.

Section 5. Provisions of this resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, the Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof, and to designate a study completion date.

Approved April 9, 2002