

Report to:
Governor, State of Oklahoma
Speaker of the House of Representatives
President Pro Tempore of the Senate
Director, Oklahoma Department of Human Services

From: The Oklahoma Pharmacy Connection Council
July 19, 2006

Following is the 2005 report of the Oklahoma Pharmacy Connection Council, as set out in Title 56 O.S. Section 1010.21. The Council filed a previous report dated February 9, 2005.

The purpose of the Council is to improve access to prescription drugs for citizens who have no health insurance, inadequate health insurance, or limited resources for the purchase of medically necessary prescription drugs.

In late 2005, this Council declared the Prescription Assistance Service Pilot Program in Norman, a success. The Oklahoma State Legislature passed HB 1853, the *Rx for Oklahoma Act* in 2005. This program provides the uninsured or underinsured Oklahomans with assistance in obtaining medications through patient assistance plans (PAPs). Some pharmaceutical manufacturers, for many years, made these plans available to low-income and uninsured persons. The legislature appropriated funding in the amount of one million dollars to establish the Rx for Oklahoma Program. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce administered the program and disbursed the funds. The Oklahoma Department of Commerce awarded bids, in December 5, 2005 to the Central Oklahoma Community Action Agency (COCAA). The program established partnerships with Area Agencies on Aging and Oklahoma Community Action Agencies to provide this service on a statewide basis. The office in Norman, Oklahoma expanded. The program established a statewide toll free number by the end of December 31, 2005.

Program Progress-Manufacturer Prescription Assistance

Persons Served: 7,200 (January 05-Dec 05)

Number of Prescriptions provided: more than 30,000

Annualized Retail Cost (Savings) Prescriptions Provided: \$23,531,189

The program assisted individuals face-to-face and through the mail in all areas of Oklahoma. There were approximately 30 partnering agencies providing services in local areas. The location of the primary site for the program was in Norman, Oklahoma. The program did not deny services to anyone who applied for assistance. Client surveys and unsolicited comments indicated a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Prescription Assistance Program, Rx for Oklahoma, and pharmaceutical manufacturers.

Program Progress-Medicare Part D Drug Discount Card Enrollment Assistance

Rx for Oklahoma sponsored many Medicare Part D sign ups. The State of Oklahoma issued licenses to employees and volunteers to assist with enrollment of individuals in appropriate Medicare Part D programs. During 2005, Rx for Oklahoma, volunteers, and employees assisted more than 500 Oklahomans in choosing a Medicare Part D plan. The Senior Health Insurance Counseling Program (SCHIP) and Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services provided training. The primary focus of the Rx for Oklahoma Program was to promote and link residents to pharmaceutical manufacturer assistance programs. However, helping seniors with Medicare Part D was also a focus of the program. The program set up Sites for enrollment in Medicare Part D plans at local libraries, technical schools, Area Agencies on Aging and Community Action Agencies offices, including the Rx for Oklahoma office in Norman, Oklahoma. Senior advocates, such as elder care nursing staff, SCHIP, Social Security, Office of Handicapped Concerns, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, Oklahoma Department of Human Services Aging Services Division (OKDHS ASD), and others played important roles.

Next Steps and Future Direction for the Council

- Target appropriate service provider participants including, community action agencies, area agencies on aging, community clinics, and faith based organization jurisdictions.
- Assist with implementation of the model.
- Continue to cultivate and consult with local officials, including local and state legislators, during implementation steps including funding and service delivery.
- Assure the continued assistance of availability to uninsured and underinsured in Oklahoma.
- Serve as a resource for pharmaceutical benefit issues.
- Assist with changing Medicare Part D options.
- Coordinate resources with Rx for Oklahoma and other agencies to increase awareness of legal discount medication programs available to all Oklahomans.
- Communicate information to government officials and advocacy groups.
- Continue to proactively review and consider taking a position on pending legislation relating to prescription access and affordability for all Oklahomans.

The State statute requires posting of this report on the OKDHS Web site as follows:

<http://www.okdhs.org>

The Council Co-chair also requested members to post the report on their organizations' website.

Respectfully submitted by:

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