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SENATE BILL NO. 158

Senate Amendments in [] — January 26, 2004

A BILL to amend and reenact § 32.1-23.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to dissemination of Medicare pharmaceutical benefits information and certain training of senior citizen volunteers.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Senator Potts

Referred to Committee on Education and Health**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That § 32.1-23.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 32.1-23.1. Alternative delivery of certain information; Medicare pharmaceutical benefits; training.

A. The Commissioner shall create links from the Virginia Department of Health's website to the Virginia Department for the Aging's website and its affiliated sites pertaining to pharmaceutical assistance programs and pharmaceutical discount purchasing cards. The Commissioner of the Department for the Aging shall cooperate with the Commissioner of Health by ensuring that such information is available on the Department for the Aging's website.

B. The Commissioner shall ensure that all clinical sites administered by local health departments are provided with adequate information concerning the services of the Virginia Department for the Aging, including, but not limited to, its toll-free telephone number and its website information on pharmaceutical assistance programs and pharmaceutical discount purchasing cards.

C. The Commissioner of Health and the Commissioner of the Department for the Aging shall coordinate the dissemination of information to the public regarding any pharmaceutical discount purchasing card programs while maintaining a neutral posture regarding such programs.

In addition, [with such funds as may be made available,] the Commissioner of Health and the Commissioner of the Department for the Aging shall disseminate information to the public relating to recent congressional actions relating to pharmaceutical benefits to be provided under the Medicare program and how such benefits may help senior citizens with the costs of pharmaceutical benefits.

D. The Commissioner shall establish a toll-free telephone number, to be administered by the Virginia Department of Health, which shall provide recorded information concerning services available from the Department for the Aging, the Virginia Area Agencies on Aging, and other appropriate organizations for senior citizens.

E. The Commissioner of Health and the Commissioner of the Department for the Aging shall develop a strategy, in coordination with the Virginia Area Agencies on Aging, for [disseminating information to the public concerning the availability of pharmaceutical assistance programs and for] training senior citizen volunteers to assist in completing applications for pharmaceutical assistance programs and pharmaceutical discount purchasing cards.

ENGROSSED

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