

1-1 By: Williams S.B. No. 261  
1-2 (In the Senate - Filed January 25, 2005; February 3, 2005,  
1-3 read first time and referred to Committee on State Affairs;  
1-4 March 9, 2005, reported adversely, with favorable Committee  
1-5 Substitute by the following vote: Yeas 9, Nays 0; March 9, 2005,  
1-6 sent to printer.)

1-7 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR S.B. No. 261 By: Williams

1-8 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
1-9 AN ACT

1-10 relating to the creation of a program to educate the public on the  
1-11 value of health coverage and to increase public awareness of health  
1-12 coverage options.

1-13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

1-14 SECTION 1. Subtitle B, Title 5, Insurance Code, as  
1-15 effective April 1, 2005, is amended by adding Chapter 524 to read as  
1-16 follows:

1-17 CHAPTER 524. HEALTH COVERAGE AWARENESS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

1-18 Sec. 524.001. PROGRAM ESTABLISHED. (a) The department  
1-19 shall develop and implement a health coverage public awareness and  
1-20 education program that complies with this chapter. The program  
1-21 must:

1-22 (1) increase public awareness of health coverage  
1-23 options available in this state;

1-24 (2) educate the public on the value of health  
1-25 coverage; and

1-26 (3) provide information on health coverage options,  
1-27 including health savings accounts and compatible high deductible  
1-28 health benefit plans.

1-29 (b) The department may include information about specific  
1-30 health coverage issuers but may not favor or endorse one particular  
1-31 issuer over another.

1-32 Sec. 524.002. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS. The department  
1-33 shall develop and make public service announcements to educate  
1-34 consumers and employers about the availability of health coverage  
1-35 in this state.

1-36 Sec. 524.003. INTERNET WEBSITE; PUBLIC EDUCATION. (a) The  
1-37 department shall develop an Internet website designed to educate  
1-38 the public about the availability of health coverage in this state,  
1-39 including information about health savings accounts and compatible  
1-40 high deductible health benefit plans.

1-41 (b) The department shall provide other appropriate  
1-42 education to the public regarding the value of health coverage.

1-43 Sec. 524.004. TASK FORCE. (a) The commissioner shall  
1-44 appoint a task force to make recommendations regarding the health  
1-45 coverage public awareness and education program. The task force is  
1-46 composed of:

1-47 (1) one representative from each of the following  
1-48 groups or entities:

1-49 (A) health benefit coverage consumers;

1-50 (B) small employers;

1-51 (C) employers generally;

1-52 (D) insurance agents;

1-53 (E) the office of public insurance counsel;

1-54 (F) the Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool;

1-55 (G) physicians;

1-56 (H) hospital trade associations; and

1-57 (I) medical units of institutions of higher  
1-58 education;

1-59 (2) a representative of the Health and Human Services  
1-60 Commission responsible for programs under Medicaid and the  
1-61 children's health insurance program; and

1-62 (3) one or more representatives of health benefit plan  
1-63 issuers.

