

Amend SB 1731 (House Committee Printing) by adding the following appropriately numbered SECTION to the bill and renumbering subsequent SECTIONS of the bill accordingly:

SECTION _____. Chapter 524, Insurance Code, is amended to read as follows:

CHAPTER 524. TEXLINK TO HEALTH COVERAGE [~~AWARENESS AND EDUCATION~~]

PROGRAM

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 524.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Division" means the division of the department that administers the TexLink to Health Coverage Program.

(2) "Program" means the TexLink to Health Coverage Program established in accordance with this chapter.

Sec. 524.002. DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES. Under the direction of the commissioner, the division implements this chapter.

Sec. 524.003. TEXLINK TO HEALTH COVERAGE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED. (a) The department shall develop and implement a health coverage [~~public awareness and education~~] program that complies with this chapter. The program must:

(1) educate the public about the importance and value of health coverage;

(2) promote personal responsibility for health care through the purchase of health coverage;

(3) assist small employers, individuals, and others seeking to purchase health coverage with technical information necessary to understand available health coverage products;

(4) promote and facilitate the development and availability of new health coverage options;

(5) increase public awareness of health coverage options available in this state; and

(6) [~~(2)~~ educate the public on the value of health coverage; and

[~~(3)~~] provide information on health coverage options, including health savings accounts and compatible high deductible health benefit plans.

(b) The program must include a public awareness and

education component.

[Sections 524.004-524.050 reserved for expansion]

SUBCHAPTER B. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

Sec. 524.051. INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIFIC HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN ISSUERS. In materials produced for the program, the division ~~[(b) The department]~~ may include information about specific health benefit plan ~~[coverage]~~ issuers but may not favor or endorse one particular issuer over another.

Sec. 524.052. ~~[524.002.]~~ PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS. The division ~~[department]~~ shall develop and make public service announcements to educate consumers and employers about the availability of health coverage in this state.

Sec. 524.053. ~~[524.003.]~~ INTERNET WEBSITE; PRINTED MATERIALS; NEWSLETTER ~~[PUBLIC EDUCATION]~~. (a) The division ~~[department]~~ shall develop an Internet website and printed materials designed to educate small employers, individuals, and others seeking to purchase health coverage ~~[the public]~~ about ~~[the availability of]~~ health coverage in accordance with Section 524.003(a) ~~[in this state, including information about health savings accounts and compatible high deductible health benefit plans]~~.

(b) The division shall make the printed materials produced under the program available to small employers, individuals, and others seeking to purchase health coverage. The division may:

(1) distribute the printed materials through facilities such as libraries, health care facilities, and schools as well as other venues the division selects; and

(2) use other distribution methods the division selects.

(c) The division may produce a newsletter to provide updated information about health coverage to subscribers who elect to receive the newsletter. The division may:

(1) produce a newsletter under this subsection for small employers, for individuals, or for other purchasers of health coverage;

(2) distribute the newsletter on a monthly, quarterly, or other basis; and

(3) distribute the newsletter as a printed document or electronically.

Sec. 524.054. TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE HOTLINE; ACCESS TO INFORMATION. (a) The division may operate a toll-free telephone hotline to respond to inquiries and provide information and technical assistance concerning health coverage products.

(b) The Health and Human Services Commission, through its 2-1-1 telephone number for access to human services, may disseminate information regarding health coverage products provided to the commission by the department and may refer inquiries regarding health coverage products to the toll-free telephone hotline. The department may provide information to the Health and Human Services Commission as necessary to implement this subsection.

Sec. 524.055. EDUCATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS. (a) The division may develop educational materials and a curriculum to be used in high school classes that educate students about:

(1) the importance and value of health coverage;
(2) comparing health benefit plans; and
(3) understanding basic provisions contained in health benefit plans.

(b) The division may consult with the Texas Education Agency in developing educational materials and a curriculum under this section.

Sec. 524.056. HEALTH COVERAGE FAIRS. (a) The division may conduct health coverage fairs to provide small employers, individuals, and others seeking to purchase health coverage the opportunity to obtain information about health coverage from division employees and from health benefit plan issuers and agents that elect to participate.

(b) The division shall seek to obtain funding for health coverage fairs conducted under this section through gifts and grants obtained in accordance with Subchapter D.

Sec. 524.057. COMMUNITY EVENTS. The division may participate in events held in this state to promote awareness of the importance and value of health coverage and to educate small employers, individuals, and others seeking to purchase health

coverage about health coverage in accordance with Section 524.003(a).

Sec. 524.058. HEALTH COVERAGE PROVIDED THROUGH COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. The division may cooperate with a public or private college or university to promote enrollment in health coverage programs sponsored by or through the college or university.

Sec. 524.059. SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS. The division may provide support and assistance to individuals and organizations seeking to develop community-based health coverage plans for uninsured individuals.

Sec. 524.060. OTHER EDUCATION. The division may ~~[department shall]~~ provide other appropriate education to the public regarding health coverage and the importance and value of health coverage in accordance with Section 524.003(a).

Sec. 524.061. [524.004.] TASK FORCE. (a) The commissioner may ~~[shall]~~ appoint a task force to make recommendations regarding the division's duties under this subchapter ~~[health coverage public awareness and education program]~~. If appointed, the ~~[The]~~ task force must be ~~[is]~~ composed of:

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

- (A) health ~~[benefit]~~ coverage consumers;
- (B) small employers;
- (C) employers generally;
- (D) insurance agents;
- (E) the office of public insurance counsel;
- (F) the Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool;
- (G) physicians;
- (H) advanced practice nurses;
- (I) hospital trade associations; and
- (J) medical units of institutions of higher education;

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

(3) one or more representatives of health benefit plan issuers.

(b) In addition to the individuals listed in Subsection (a), the commissioner may select to serve on any task force one or more individuals with experience in public relations, marketing, or another related field of professional services.

(c) The division may [~~department shall~~] consult the task force regarding the content for the public service announcements, Internet website, printed materials, and other educational materials required or authorized by this subchapter [~~chapter~~]. The commissioner has authority to make final decisions as to what the program's materials will contain.

[Sections 524.062-524.100 reserved for expansion]

SUBCHAPTER C. ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN BUSINESSES

Sec. 524.101. FEDERAL TAX "TOOL KIT" FOR CERTAIN BUSINESSES. The division may produce materials that provide information about obtaining health coverage in a manner that qualifies for favorable treatment under federal tax laws.

Sec. 524.102. ASSISTANCE FOR SMALL EMPLOYERS AND SINGLE-EMPLOYEE BUSINESSES. Division staff may respond to telephone inquiries regarding health coverage options for small employers and single-employee businesses and may speak at events to provide information about health coverage options for small employers and single-employee businesses and about the importance and value of health coverage.

Sec. 524.103. COOPERATIVES FOR SMALL AND LARGE EMPLOYERS. The division may provide information regarding the formation of or participation in private purchasing cooperatives and health group cooperatives in accordance with Subchapter B, Chapter 1501.

Sec. 524.104. ACCOUNTANT. The division may consult an accountant with experience in federal tax law and the purchase of group health coverage as necessary to implement this subchapter.

[Sections 524.105-524.150 reserved for expansion]

SUBCHAPTER D. FUNDING

Sec. 524.151 [~~524.005~~]. FUNDING. The department may accept gifts and grants from any party, including a health benefit plan issuer or a foundation associated with a health benefit plan issuer, to assist with funding the program. The department shall adopt rules governing acceptance of donations that are consistent

with Chapter 575, Government Code. Before adopting rules under this section [~~subsection~~], the department shall:

(1) submit the proposed rules to the Texas Ethics Commission for review; and

(2) consider the commission's recommendations regarding the regulations.