



The Senate Connection

Connecting Davie and Rowan Counties with news from the
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Senate Bill 287-State Health Plan:

The legislation would change the Plan's cost sharing and benefits, which would become effective July 1, 2009, if approved by the General Assembly. Bill sponsor Senator Tony Rand (D-Cumberland) said that the bill must be approved prior to March 30 to enable the Health Plan to implement the changes necessary to pay its bills and to continue to serve members. The bill will be considered by the Senate Monday, March 16. The bill could be amended during that process. Afterward, it will be considered by at least two House committees prior to consideration by the House of Representatives. The bill is bad news for North Carolina pharmacists and pharmacies. While the bill would generate revenues and savings through a myriad of changes that mean higher costs for employees covered by the plan, plus the loss of optical coverage and a penalty for smokers and persons who are overweight, pharmacists suffer disproportionately among providers. As was summarized in the Legislative Update Feb. 20, the bill would:

- ◆ Implementation of an Extended Retail Pharmacy Network and Medco by Mail Order option.
- ◆ Retail pharmacies, both chains and independents, would be solicited to join an Extended Retail Pharmacy network to dispense maintenance drugs. Plan administrators acknowledge the network would likely reimburse similarly to Medco's Illinois network, which pays pharmacies AWP -26% plus no dispensing fee. Medicaid reimburses at AWP -10% plus a \$6.50 fee!
- ◆ After two 30 day fills of a maintenance medication, members would be required to obtain their maintenance medications from a retail pharmacy participating in the Extended Retail Network or by Medco by Mail. If they do not choose one of these channels they would be subject to a penalty.
- ◆ Prescription drugs for acute conditions would not be impacted by this program.
- ◆ For those members selecting a pharmacy in the extended retail pharmacy or obtaining their maintenance drugs by mail order, they will only be responsible for 2.5 times their monthly copay for a three months supply. For members who choose not to fill their maintenance medications through one of these channels they will be required to pay 50% retail copay of the pharmacy allowable charges.



Since Bill 287 was brought before the senate, Senator Brock has been adamantly against it passing for the simple fact that it is going to hurt our state employees and possibly put most of our local pharmacies out of business. For a full view of this bill please visit [Senate Bill 287](#).

North Carolina 2009-2010 Budget:

The North Carolina budget for 2009-2010 was released on Tuesday March 17, for a full summary of the new budget please check out the following links:

Summary:

- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/Summary

Allocation to Specific Areas:

- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/Education
- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/GeneralGovernment
- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/Health and Human Services
- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/Justice and Public Safety
- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/Natural and Economic resources
- ◆ www.governor.state.nc.us/Transportation

Sources

- ◆ Hawthorne, Evelyn. "State Health Plan Changes to be Voted on March 16."
[North Carolina Association of Pharmacist](#), March 18 2009
www.ncpharmacist.org