



NEWS RELEASE

State Rep. Mike Veon
D-Beaver
www.pahouse.com/Veon

CONTACT: Bob Caton
Office of the Democratic Whip
Phone: 717-772-2006
Email: bcaton@pahouse.net



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Veon unveils program to provide prescription drug coverage to low-income workers aged 18 to 64 *Proposal would emulate successful Maryland effort*

HARRISBURG, Feb. 2 – State Rep. Mike Veon announced his intention to work with the administration to create a new state program that would provide prescription drug coverage to working people that are not covered by private prescription programs.

“Right now, the Commonwealth has tens of thousands of working people who are eligible for the adultBasic insurance program, but who have no prescription drug coverage whatsoever,” Veon said. “It’s a very cruel irony to tell a working person that we will pay for them to see a doctor, but if they need medicine they’re on their own.

“My proposal would be based upon Maryland’s very successful MEDBANK program that has returned their investment nearly tenfold -- \$8 million in investments has resulted in more than \$70 million in affordable medicine for people there. I am confident that the program will be even more effective here in Pennsylvania with our rapidly aging population.”

The program would act as a single point-of-contact for Pennsylvanians earning 200 percent of the federal poverty level or less. After eligibility is determined, MEDBANK would assist people in utilizing existing pharmaceutical company programs that offer deep discounts.

“These are discount offers that already currently exist, but, until now, there has been no clearinghouse for people seeking information. We need to cut through the red tape and help these people find out what programs can help, and make sure their applications are kept up-to-date. MEDBANK’s innovative software program and trained staff gets that job done.

“This program is a proven winner in Maryland, and the drug companies are fully on board to provide this medicine.”

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Bob McEwan, founder and C.E.O. of MEDBANK of Maryland, stated, "We are gratified to have been asked by Rep. Veon to work with the the state of Pennsylvania to develop and manage their prescription medication access program," Bob McEwan, founder and C.E.O. of MEDBANK of Maryland said. "This program could ultimately save the state millions of dollars by reducing greatly the number of emergency room visits and hospital stays for low income patients who do not have prescription medication access.

"Access to prescription medications is an important step in proactive medical care and continues to prove to be the least expensive way to prevent otherwise avoidable emergency room visits and hospitalizations The Maryland residents for whom we have been able to help gain access to needed prescription medications would likely not otherwise have gotten them. Our 'Rx Bridge" software automates the process of navigating over 100 pharmaceutical programs that offer free prescription programs to patients who qualify."

In Maryland alone MEDBANK Program has helped more than 30,000 residents gain access to over \$90 million in free prescription medications. MEDBANK also has set up programs in Hawaii, New Jersey, Ohio and New Mexico.

The program would be part of the 2006-2007 state budget and be administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Insurance.

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