

Senate Bill No. 1450

An act relating to arthritis prevention and education; creating s. 385.210, F.S.; providing a short title; providing legislative findings; providing purposes; directing the Department of Health to establish an arthritis prevention and education program; requiring the department to conduct a needs assessment; providing for establishment of a statewide partnership on arthritis; providing for implementation of a public awareness effort; providing for funding through contributions; directing the Secretary of Health to seek federal waivers as necessary to maximize federal funding; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 385.210, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

385.210 Arthritis prevention and education.—

(1) SHORT TITLE.—This act may be cited as the “Arthritis Prevention and Education Act.”

(2) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—The Legislature finds the following:

(a) Arthritis encompasses more than 100 diseases and conditions that affect joints, the surrounding tissues, and other connective tissues.

(b) Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, limiting daily activities for more than 7 million citizens.

(c) This disease has a significant impact on quality of life, not only for the individual who experiences its painful symptoms and resulting disability, but also for family members and caregivers.

(d) There are enormous economic and social costs associated with treating arthritis and its complications; the economic costs are estimated at over \$116 billion (1997) annually in the United States.

(e) Currently, the challenge exists to ensure delivery of effective, but often underutilized, interventions that are necessary in the prevention or reduction of arthritis-related pain and disability.

(f) Although there exists a large quantity of public information about arthritis, including programs that can dramatically affect early diagnosis and treatment as well as the quality of life of people with arthritis, such information remains inadequately disseminated and insufficient in addressing the needs of specific diverse populations and other underserved groups.

(g) The National Arthritis Foundation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials have led the development of a public health strategy, the National Arthritis Action Plan, to respond to this challenge.

(h) Educating the public and the health care community throughout the state about this devastating disease is of paramount importance and is in every respect in the public interest and to the benefit of all residents of the state.

(3) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are to:

(a) Create and foster a statewide program that promotes public awareness and increases knowledge concerning the causes of arthritis, the importance of early diagnosis and appropriate management, effective prevention strategies, and pain prevention and management.

(b) Develop knowledge and enhance understanding of arthritis by disseminating educational materials and information on research results, services provided, and strategies for prevention and education to patients, health professionals, and the public.

(c) Establish a solid scientific base of knowledge concerning the prevention of arthritis and related disabilities through surveillance, epidemiology, and prevention research.

(d) Use educational and training resources and services developed by organizations with appropriate expertise and knowledge of arthritis and to use available technical assistance.

(e) Evaluate the need for improving the quality and accessibility of existing community-based arthritis services.

(f) Heighten awareness among state and local health and human services officials, health professionals and providers, and policymakers about the prevention, detection, and treatment of arthritis.

(g) Implement and coordinate state and local programs and services to reduce the public health burden of arthritis.

(h) Provide lasting improvements in the delivery of health care for individuals with arthritis and their families, thus improving their quality of life while also containing health care costs.

(4) ARTHRITIS PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM.—

(a) Program establishment.—To the extent that funds are specifically made available for this purpose, the Department of Health shall establish, promote, and maintain an arthritis prevention and education program to raise public awareness, educate consumers, and educate and train health professionals, teachers, and human services providers, and for other purposes as provided in this section.

(b) Needs assessment.—The department shall conduct a needs assessment to identify:

1. Epidemiological and other research on arthritis being conducted within the state.

2. Available technical assistance and educational materials and programs on arthritis nationwide and within the state.
3. The level of public and professional awareness of arthritis.
4. The needs of people with arthritis, their families, and caregivers.
5. The educational and support service needs of health care providers, including physicians, nurses, managed care organizations, and other health care providers, relating to arthritis.
6. The services available to persons with arthritis.
7. The existence of arthritis treatment, self-management, physical activity, and other education programs.
8. The existence of rehabilitation services for people with arthritis.

(c) Statewide partnership on arthritis.—The department shall establish and coordinate a statewide partnership on arthritis to collaborate on and address arthritis issues within the state. Membership shall include, but is not limited to, persons with arthritis, public health educators, medical experts on arthritis, providers of arthritis health care, persons knowledgeable in health promotion and education, and representatives of national arthritis organizations and their local chapters.

(d) Public awareness.—The department shall use, but is not limited to, strategies consistent with the National Arthritis Action Plan and existing state planning efforts to raise public awareness and knowledge on the causes and nature of arthritis, personal risk factors, the value of prevention and early detection, ways to minimize preventable pain through evidence-based self-management interventions, and options for diagnosing and treating the disease.

(5) FUNDING.—

(a) The Secretary of Health may accept grants, services, and property from the Federal Government, foundations, organizations, medical schools, and other entities as may be available for the purposes of fulfilling the obligations of this program.

(b) The secretary shall seek any federal waiver or waivers that may be necessary to maximize funds from the Federal Government to implement this program.

Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

Approved by the Governor June 14, 2005.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 14, 2005.