

SENATE NO. 419

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE SAFE ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS AND LEGIBLE PRESCRIPTIONS

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled,
And by the authority of the same, as follows:*

- 1 SECTION 1. (a) The Betsy Lehman center for patient safety and medical error reduction, shall
2 convene a task force, which shall develop recommendations on methods for reducing
3 medication and prescription errors including recommendations on:
- 4 (1) increasing prescription legibility;
 - 5 (2) minimizing confusion in prescription drug labeling and packaging;
 - 6 (3) developing medication error reporting plans;
 - 7 (4) researching the effect of proven medication safety practices, including the use of automated
8 drug-ordering systems;
 - 9 (5) reducing confusion created by similar-sounding drug names;
 - 10 (6) increasing patient education on the medications they are prescribed;
 - 11 (7) developing education programs for any person who writes prescriptions and reviewing the
12 education programs for new practitioners and the continuing education requirements of

13 established practitioners, including, but not limited to, programs offered to practitioners to
14 educate them on the cost effective therapeutic alternatives to prescriptions; and
15 (8) studying the issue of whether any dispensed prescription medication, other than those in unit
16 dose or unit of use packaging, shall be labeled with its physical description, including, but not
17 limited to, color, shape and any identification code that may appear on tablets and capsules.

18 (b) The task force shall include: a representative of each of the following entities: the board of
19 registration in pharmacy; the board of registration in nursing; the board of registration in
20 medicine; the board of registration in dentistry; the department of public health; the Coalition
21 for the Prevention of Medical Errors, the Massachusetts Medical Society; the Massachusetts
22 Dental Society; the Massachusetts Hospital Association; the Massachusetts Nurses Association;
23 the Massachusetts Organization of Nurse Executives; the Retailers Association of
24 Massachusetts; The Massachusetts Chain Pharmacy Council; the Massachusetts Society of
25 Health System Pharmacists; each of the medical schools located in the commonwealth; each of
26 the dental schools located in the commonwealth and each of the colleges or schools of
27 pharmacy located in the commonwealth.

28 (b)The task force shall complete the development of its recommendations not later than
29 December 15, 2009.

30 SECTION 2. The Betsy Lehman Center shall submit its report, together with any
31 recommendations for legislation or regulations, to the general court, by filing them with the
32 clerks of the senate and house of representatives, the house and senate chairs of the joint
33 committee on health care and the chairs of the house and senate committees on ways and means
34 not later than December 31, 2009.