Study: More than a million have no prescription coverage

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BOSTON (AP) More than a million people in the state have no prescription drug insurance coverage, according to a Boston University health care expert.

Alan Sager, a professor at the BU School of Public Health, estimated, based on federal, state and private studies, that, from 1,069,000 to 1,328,000 people in the state don't have the coverage.

Sager was to highlight those figures today at a hearing of the Legislature's Health Care Committee on a bill designed to cut prescription drug costs and get more people drug coverage.

The sweeping proposal, filed by Rep. Patricia Jehlen, D-Somerville, calls for the state to negotiate discounts on drugs with pharmaceutical manufacturers.

The manufacturers also would be required to pay into a trust fund to help people having a hard time paying for prescriptions.

The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America opposes the bill.

It argues that the bill would "bring the inefficiencies of a large-scale government-run program to all Massachusetts residents seeking drugs."

"The Massachusetts proposal means 'big government' bureaucracy for all Massachusetts residents, even those privately insured," the association said in a statement.