

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1977 SESSION

CHAPTER 601
HOUSE BILL 680

AN ACT TO AMEND THE GENERAL STATUTES TO PROVIDE FOR FREEDOM OF
CHOICE BY PATIENTS RELATING TO PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 57-1, as the same appears in the 1975 Replacement Volume 2B of the General Statutes, is hereby amended by rewriting the first sentence of the third paragraph to read as follows:

"The term 'medical service plan' as used in this Chapter includes the contracting for the payment of fees toward, or furnishing of, medical, obstetrical, surgical and/or any other professional services authorized or permitted to be furnished by a duly licensed physician, except that in any plan in any policy of insurance governed by this Chapter that includes services which are within the scope of practice of a duly licensed optometrist, a duly licensed chiropractor, a duly licensed practicing psychologist, and a duly licensed physician, then the insured or beneficiary shall have the right to choose the provider of the care or service, and shall be entitled to payment of or reimbursement for such care or service, whether the provider be a duly licensed optometrist, a duly licensed chiropractor, a duly licensed practicing psychologist, or a duly licensed physician notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained in such policy."

Sec. 2. G.S. 58-260, as the same appears in the 1975 Replacement Volume 2B of the General Statutes, is hereby amended by inserting in the fourth line of the second paragraph after the word "chiropractor", and before the words "the insured" the phrase: "or duly licensed practicing psychologist," and by inserting in line 8 of the second paragraph after the word "chiropractor," and before the word "notwithstanding" the phrase "or a duly licensed practicing psychologist,".

G.S. 58-260 is further amended by inserting in the second sentence of the second paragraph, on line 12 of the second paragraph, after the word "chiropractor," and before the word "the" the following: "or a duly licensed practicing psychologist," and by inserting in line 16 of the second paragraph after the word "chiropractor," at the end of that line, the following: "or a duly licensed practicing psychologist,".

Sec. 3. The right to payment or reimbursement notwithstanding any provision to the contrary contained in any plan or policy shall be applicable only to those plans and policies entered into, issued, or renewed on or after the effective date hereof, there being no legislative intent to impair or enlarge obligations under any existing contracts.

Sec. 3½. For the purposes of this act, a "duly licensed practicing psychologist" shall be defined to only include a psychologist who is duly licensed or certified in the State of North Carolina and has a doctorate degree in psychology and at least two years clinical experience in a recognized health setting, or has met the standards of the National Register of Health Providers in Psychology.

Sec. 4. All laws and clauses of laws in conflict with the provisions of this act are hereby repealed.

Sec. 5. Nothing herein contained shall be construed to obligate the General Assembly to make additional appropriations to implement the provisions of this act.

Sec. 6. This act shall become effective on October 1, 1977.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 17th day off June, 1977.