

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
1981 SESSION

CHAPTER 586  
HOUSE BILL 815

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES WHO ARE EMPOWERED TO INSPECT CERTAIN FACILITIES TO HAVE ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL RECORDS AND INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE PATIENTS OR RESIDENTS OF THOSE FACILITIES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**Section 1.** G.S. 130-9(e)(1) is amended by adding, at the end of the present language, the following:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 8-53 or any other provision of law relating to the confidentiality of communications between physician and patient, the representatives of the Department of Human Resources who make these licensure inspections may review any writing or other record in any recording medium which pertains to the admission, discharge, medication, treatment, medical condition, or history of persons who are or have been patients, residents, or clients of the facility being inspected unless that patient, resident or client objects in writing to such review of his records. Physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and anyone else involved in giving treatment at or through a facility who may be interviewed by representatives of the Department may disclose to these representatives information related to an inquiry, notwithstanding the existence of the physician-patient privilege in G.S. 8-53 or any other rule of law; provided the patient, resident or client has not made written objection to such disclosure. The facility, its employees, and any person interviewed during these inspections shall be immune from liability for damages resulting from the disclosure of any information to the Department. Any confidential or privileged information received from review of records or interviews shall be kept confidential by the Department and not disclosed without written authorization of the patient, resident, client or legal representative or unless disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The Department shall institute appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that this information shall not be disclosed without authorization or court order. The Department shall not disclose the name of anyone who has furnished information concerning a facility without the consent of that person. Neither the names of persons furnishing information nor any confidential or privileged information obtained from records or interviews shall be considered 'public records' within the meaning of G.S. 132-1. Prior to releasing any information or allowing any inspections referred to in this section the patient, resident or client must be advised in writing that he has the right to object in writing to such release of information or review of his records and that by an objection in writing he may prohibit the inspection or release of his records."

**Sec. 2.** G.S. 130-170.1(b) is amended by adding, at the end of the present language, the following:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 8-53 or any other provision of law relating to the confidentiality of communications between physician and patient, the representatives of the Department of Human Resources who make these inspections may review any writing or other record in any recording medium which pertains to the admission, discharge, medication, treatment, medical condition, or history of persons who are or have been patients or clients of the facility being inspected unless that patient, resident or client objects in writing to such

review of his records. Physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and anyone else involved in giving treatment at or through a facility who may be interviewed by representatives of the Department may disclose to these representatives information related to an inquiry, notwithstanding the existence of the physician-patient privilege in G.S. 8-53 or any other rule of law; provided the patient, resident or client has not made written objection to such disclosure. The facility, its employees, and any person interviewed during these inspections shall be immune from liability for damages resulting from the disclosure of any information to the Department. Any confidential or privileged information received from review of records or interviews shall be kept confidential by the Department and not disclosed without written authorization of the patient, client or legal representative, or unless disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The Department shall institute appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that this information shall not be disclosed without authorization or court order. The Department shall not disclose the name of anyone who has furnished information concerning a facility without the consent of that person. Neither the names of persons furnishing information nor any confidential or privileged information obtained from records or interviews shall be considered 'public records' within the meaning of G.S. 132-1. Prior to releasing any information or allowing any inspections referred to in this section the patient, resident or client must be advised in writing that he has the right to object in writing to such release of information or review of his records and that by an objection in writing he may prohibit the inspection or release of his records."

**Sec. 3.** G.S. 131-126.9, is amended by inserting the following language immediately after the first sentence:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 8-53 or any other provision of law relating to the confidentiality of communications between physician and patient, the representatives of the Department of Human Resources who make these inspections may review any writing or other record in any recording medium which pertains to the admission, discharge, medication, treatment, medical condition, or history of persons who are or have been patients, residents or clients of the facility being inspected unless that patient, resident or client objects in writing to such review of his records. Physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and anyone else involved in giving treatment at or through a facility who may be interviewed by representatives of the Department may disclose to these representatives information related to an inquiry, notwithstanding the existence of the physician-patient privilege in G.S. 8-53 or any other rule of law; provided the patient, resident or client has not made written objection to such disclosure. The facility, its employees, and any person interviewed during these inspections shall be immune from liability for damages resulting from the disclosure of any information to the Department. Prior to releasing any information or allowing any inspections referred to in this section the patient, resident or client must be advised in writing that he has the right to object in writing to such release of information or review of his records and that by an objection in writing he may prohibit the inspection or release of his records."

**Sec. 4.** G.S. 131-126.12 is amended by inserting the following language after the first sentence:

"Any confidential or privileged information received from review of records or interviews shall be kept confidential by the Department and not disclosed without written authorization of the patient, resident, client or legal representative, or unless disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The Department shall institute appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that this information shall not be disclosed without authorization or court order. The Department shall not disclose the name of anyone who has furnished information concerning a facility without the consent of that person. Neither the names of persons furnishing information nor any confidential or privileged information obtained from records or interviews shall be considered 'public records' within the meaning of G.S. 132-1. Prior to releasing any information or allowing any inspections referred to in this section the patient, resident or client must be

advised in writing that he has the right to object in writing to such release of information or review of his records and that by an objection in writing he may prohibit the inspection or release of his records."

**Sec. 5.** G.S. 131B-7 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 8-53 or any other provision of law relating to the confidentiality of communications between physician and patient, the representatives of the Department of Human Resources who make these inspections may review any writing or other record in any recording medium which pertains to the admission, discharge, medication, treatment, medical condition, or history of persons who are or have been patients, residents or clients of the facility being inspected unless that patient, resident or client objects in writing to such review of his records. Physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and anyone else involved in giving treatment at or through a facility who may be interviewed by representatives of the Department may disclose to these representatives information related to an inquiry, notwithstanding the existence of the physician-patient privilege in G.S. 8-53 or any other rule of law; provided the patient, resident or client has not made written objection to such disclosure. The facility, its employees, and any person interviewed during these inspections shall be immune from liability for damages resulting from the disclosure of any information to the Department. Any confidential or privileged information received from review of records or interviews shall be kept confidential by the Department and not disclosed without written authorization of the patient, resident, client or legal representative, or unless disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The Department shall institute appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that this information shall not be disclosed without authorization or court order. The Department shall not disclose the name of anyone who has furnished information concerning a facility without the consent of that person. Neither the names of persons furnishing information nor any confidential or privileged information obtained from records or interviews shall be considered 'public records' within the meaning of G.S. 132-1. Prior to releasing any information or allowing any inspections referred to in this section the patient, resident or client must be advised in writing that he has the right to object in writing to such release of information or review of his records and that by an objection in writing he may prohibit the inspection or release of his records."

**Sec. 6.** G.S. 153A-222, is amended by adding, at the end of the present language, the following:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 8-53 or any other provision of law relating to the confidentiality of communications between physician and patient, the representatives of the Department of Human Resources who make these inspections may review any writing or other record in any recording medium which pertains to the admission, discharge, medication, treatment, medical condition, or history of persons who are or have been inmates of the facility being inspected. Physicians, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses, and anyone else involved in giving treatment at or through a facility who may be interviewed by representatives of the Department may disclose to these representatives information related to an inquiry, notwithstanding the existence of the physician-patient privilege in G.S. 8-53 or any other rule of law; provided the patient, resident or client has not made written objection to such disclosure. The facility, its employees, and any person interviewed during these inspections shall be immune from liability for damages resulting from the disclosure of any information to the Department. Any confidential or privileged information received from review of records or interviews shall be kept confidential by the Department and not disclosed without written authorization of the inmate or legal representative, or unless disclosure is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The Department shall institute appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that this information shall not be disclosed without authorization or court order. The Department shall not disclose the name of anyone who has furnished information concerning a facility without the consent of that person. Neither the names of persons furnishing information

nor any confidential or privileged information obtained from records or interviews shall be considered 'public records' within the meaning of G.S. 132-1. Prior to releasing any information or allowing any inspections referred to in this section the patient, resident or client must be advised in writing that he has the right to object in writing to such release of information or review of his records and that by an objection in writing he may prohibit the inspection or release of his records."

**Sec. 7.** This act is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 16th day of June, 1981.