

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1997 SESSION

SESSION LAW 1997-522
SENATE BILL 851

AN ACT REGARDING ADULT CARE HOME LICENSES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 131D-2(b) reads as rewritten:

"(b) Licensure; inspections. --

(1) The Department of Human Resources shall inspect and license, under rules adopted by the Social Services Commission, all adult care homes for persons who are aged or mentally or physically disabled except those exempt in subsection (c) of this section. Licenses issued under the authority of this section shall be valid for one year from the date of issuance unless revoked earlier by the Secretary of Human Resources for failure to comply with any part of this section or any rules adopted hereunder. No new license shall be issued for any domiciliary home whose administrator was the administrator for any domiciliary home (adult care home) that had its license revoked until one full year after the date of revocation. Licenses shall be renewed annually upon filing and the Department's approval of the renewal application. A license shall not be renewed if outstanding fines and penalties imposed by the State against the home have not been paid. Fines and penalties for which an appeal is pending are exempt from consideration. The renewal application shall contain all necessary and reasonable information that the Department may by rule require. The Department may amend a license by reducing it from a full license to a provisional license whenever the Department finds that:

- a. The licensee has substantially failed to comply with the provisions of Articles 1 and 3 of Chapter 131D of the General Statutes and the rules adopted pursuant to these Articles;
- b. There is a reasonable probability that the licensee can remedy the licensure deficiencies within a reasonable length of time;
and
- c. There is a reasonable probability that the licensee will be able thereafter to remain in compliance with the licensure rules for the foreseeable future.

The Department may revoke a license whenever:

- a. The Department finds that:
 - 1. The licensee has substantially failed to comply with the provisions of Articles 1 and 3 of Chapter 131D of the General Statutes and the rules adopted pursuant to these Articles; and
 - 2. It is not reasonably probable that the licensee can remedy the licensure deficiencies within a reasonable length of time; or
- b. The Department finds that:
 - 1. The licensee has substantially failed to comply with the provisions of Articles 1 and 3 of Chapter 131D of the General Statutes and the rules adopted pursuant to these Articles; and
 - 2. Although the licensee may be able to remedy the deficiencies within a reasonable time, it is not reasonably probable that the licensee will be able to remain in compliance with licensure rules for the foreseeable future; or
- c. The Department finds that the licensee has failed to comply with the provisions of Articles 1 and 3 of Chapter 131D of the General Statutes and the rules adopted pursuant to these Articles, and the failure to comply endangered the health, safety, or welfare of the patients in the facility.

The Department may also issue a provisional license to a facility, pursuant to rules adopted by the Social Services Commission, for substantial failure to comply with the provisions of this section or rules promulgated pursuant to this section. Any facility wishing to contest the issuance of a provisional license shall be entitled to an administrative hearing as provided in the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. A petition for a contested case shall be filed within 30 days after the Department mails written notice of the issuance of the provisional license.

- (1a) In addition to the licensing and inspection requirements mandated by subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Department shall ensure that adult care homes required to be licensed by this Article are monitored for licensure compliance on a regular basis. In carrying out this requirement, the Department shall work with county departments of social services to do the routine monitoring and to have the Division of Facility Services oversee this monitoring and perform any follow-up inspection called for. The Department shall also keep an up-to-date directory of all persons who are administrators as defined in subdivision (1a) of subsection (a) of this section.

- (2) Any individual or corporation that establishes, conducts, manages, or operates a facility subject to licensure under this section without a license is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be punishable only by a fine of not more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) for the first offense and not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each subsequent offense. Each day of a continuing violation after conviction shall be considered a separate offense.
- (3) In addition, the Department may summarily suspend a license pursuant to G.S. 150B-3(c) whenever it finds substantial evidence of abuse, neglect, exploitation or any condition which presents an imminent danger to the health and safety of any resident of the home. Any facility wishing to contest summary suspension of a license shall be entitled to an administrative hearing as provided in the Administrative Procedure Act, Chapter 150B of the General Statutes. A petition for a contested case shall be filed within 20 days after the Department mails a notice of summary suspension to the licensee.
- (4) Notwithstanding G.S. 8-53 or any other law relating to confidentiality of communications between physician and patient, in the course of an inspection conducted under subsection (b):
 - a. Department representatives may review any writing or other record concerning the admission, discharge, medication, care, medical condition, or history of any person who is or has been a resident of the facility being inspected, and
 - b. Any person involved in giving care or treatment at or through the facility may disclose information to Department representatives;unless the resident objects in writing to review of his records or disclosure of such information.

The facility, its employees and any other person interviewed in the course of an inspection shall be immune from liability for damages resulting from disclosure of any information to the Department.

The Department shall not disclose:

 - a. Any confidential or privileged information obtained under this subsection unless the resident or his legal representative authorizes disclosure in writing or unless a court of competent jurisdiction orders disclosure, or
 - b. The name of anyone who has furnished information concerning a facility without that person's consent.

The Department shall institute appropriate policies and procedures to ensure that unauthorized disclosure does not occur. All confidential or privileged information obtained under this section and the names of persons providing such information shall be exempt from Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.

- (5) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, Chapter 132 of the General Statutes, the Public Records Law, applies to all records of the State Division of Social Services of the Department of Human Resources and of any county department of social services regarding inspections of domiciliary care facilities except for information in the records that is confidential or privileged, including medical records, or that contains the names of residents or complainants."

Section 2. This act is effective when it becomes law and applies beginning with calendar year 1998.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 28th day of August, 1997.

s/ Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

s/ Harold J. Brubaker
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ James B. Hunt, Jr.
Governor

Approved 11:02 a.m. this 17th day of September, 1997