

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2015

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SENATE DRS45182-MGa-61A (03/03)

Short Title: Appropriate Funds for Poison Control. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Tucker (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN  
3 SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, TO PROVIDE STATEWIDE POISON  
4 CONTROL SERVICES THROUGH THE CAROLINAS POISON CENTER.

5 Whereas, deaths from drug overdose have been steadily rising over the past decade  
6 and have become the leading cause of injury deaths in the United States; and

7 Whereas, the Carolinas Poison Center (the Center) has provided high-quality,  
8 cost-efficient services to the citizens of North Carolina since 1996 by serving as the State's  
9 poison control center providing a first line of detection for poisonings involving  
10 pharmaceuticals, food, and agriculture products, as well as gases and other toxins; and

11 Whereas, the Center provides a level of security in its tracking and monitoring of  
12 reported poisonings that are shared with both federal and State agencies in a real-time  
13 environment; and

14 Whereas, in late 2014, the Center was able to establish a help line for citizens to  
15 address questions about Ebola within three hours of receiving this request from the Executive  
16 Branch; and

17 Whereas, the Center took more than 500 calls from the public in two different  
18 languages related to information about potential exposure to Ebola; and

19 Whereas, the Center has managed nearly 490,000 patients in a low-cost setting over  
20 the past five years from every county in North Carolina; and

21 Whereas, three out of every four calls are managed at the caller site at no cost to the  
22 patient or to a government or private insurer; and

23 Whereas, the Center saves the State nearly \$8,000,000 annually by averting  
24 unnecessary calls to 911 and unnecessary visits to urgent care centers, emergency rooms, and  
25 physician offices; and

26 Whereas, the Center receives approximately \$530,000 per year in federal funds that  
27 are in jeopardy and subject to maintenance of effort requirements imposed on the State; and

28 Whereas, administering a State poison control center is a responsibility and function  
29 of state government; and

30 Whereas, the Center's existence as North Carolina's poison control center, Ebola  
31 resource center, and a critical public safety surveillance tool at the State's disposal is in  
32 jeopardy without adequate State funding; and

33 Whereas, the amount of funding necessary to meet the State's obligation is short by  
34 \$1,500,000; Now, therefore,

35 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:



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1           **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
2 Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of one million five hundred  
3 thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the sum of one million five  
4 hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. These funds shall be used  
5 to increase the State contract with the Carolinas Poison Center, the designated poison center for  
6 North Carolina operated by Carolinas Medical Center.

7           **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2015.