

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

SESSION LAW 2021-156
HOUSE BILL 447

AN ACT PROTECTING THE RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OF HOSPITAL PATIENTS BY PRESERVING THEIR RIGHT TO RECEIVE VISITS BY CLERGY MEMBERS DURING HOSPITAL STAYS THAT OCCUR DURING A DECLARED DISASTER OR EMERGENCY.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Part 2 of Article 5 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 131E-84.05. Patient visitation by clergy, including during declared disasters or emergencies.

Notwithstanding G.S. 131E-84, Chapter 166A of the General Statutes, or any other provision of law to the contrary, each hospital licensed under this Article shall allow a clergy member to visit any patient admitted to the hospital who requests or consents to be visited by a clergy member during the patient's hospital stay, including a hospital stay that occurs during a declared disaster or emergency. A hospital may require a visiting clergy member to submit to health screenings necessary to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, and, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, a hospital may restrict a visiting clergy member who does not pass a health screening requirement or who has tested positive for an infectious disease. A hospital may require a visiting clergy member to adhere to infection control procedures, including wearing personal protective equipment, as long as the infection control procedures do not interfere with the religious beliefs of the patient or the visiting clergy member."

SECTION 2. This act becomes effective October 1, 2021.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 3rd day of September, 2021.

s/ Jim Perry
Presiding Officer of the Senate

s/ Harry Warren
Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper
Governor

Approved 11:53 a.m. this 16th day of September, 2021

