

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2013

H.B. 827  
Apr 10, 2013  
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

H

D

HOUSE DRH30359-MG-66D\* (02/24)

Short Title: Designate Primary Stroke Centers. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Fulghum, Carney, Hollo, and Conrad (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO  
3 DESIGNATE QUALIFIED HOSPITALS AS PRIMARY STROKE CENTERS, AS  
4 RECOMMENDED BY THE JUSTUS-WARREN HEART DISEASE AND STROKE  
5 PREVENTION TASK FORCE.

6 Whereas, stroke is the fourth leading cause of death and a leading cause of disability  
7 among North Carolinians; and

8 Whereas, North Carolina is part of the "stroke belt," an eight to 12 state region that  
9 historically has had substantially higher stroke death rates compared to the rest of the nation;  
10 and

11 Whereas, the rapid identification, diagnosis, and treatment of stroke can save the  
12 lives of stroke patients and in some cases reverse neurological damage such as paralysis and  
13 speech and language impairments, leaving stroke patients with few or minimal neurological  
14 deficits; and

15 Whereas, the designation of acute care hospitals as primary stroke centers is  
16 designed to improve the efficiency of care for stroke patients and increase the use of acute  
17 stroke therapies such as thrombolytic therapies in order to reduce stroke-related complications,  
18 reduce morbidity and mortality, improve long-term outcomes, and increase patient satisfaction;  
19 and

20 Whereas, 30 acute care hospitals in North Carolina have received Joint Commission  
21 certification as primary stroke centers; and

22 Whereas, all North Carolinians should be able to access the high quality stroke care  
23 offered by primary stroke centers and should, therefore, know which acute care hospitals in this  
24 State have been certified as primary stroke centers by the Joint Commission or achieved  
25 equivalent accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting body; Now, therefore,  
26 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

29 "**§ 131E-78.5. Designation as primary stroke center.**

30 (a) A hospital licensed under this Article shall not advertise or hold itself out to the  
31 public as a primary stroke center unless the Department has designated the hospital as a  
32 primary stroke center pursuant to this section. A hospital may apply to the Department for  
33 designation as a primary stroke center on forms and according to procedures established by the  
34 Department.

35 (b) The Department shall designate as a primary stroke center any hospital whose  
36 application demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Department that it is certified as a primary



\* D R H 3 0 3 5 9 - M G - 6 6 D \*

1 stroke center by the Joint Commission or some other nationally recognized accrediting body  
2 that requires conformance to best practices for stroke care in order to be identified as a primary  
3 stroke center.

4 (c) Each hospital designated as a primary stroke center pursuant to this section shall  
5 make efforts to coordinate the provision of appropriate acute stroke care with other hospitals  
6 licensed in this State through a formal written agreement. The agreement shall, at a minimum,  
7 address (i) transportation of acute stroke patients to hospitals designated as primary stroke  
8 centers and (ii) acceptance by hospitals designated as primary stroke centers of acute stroke  
9 patients initially treated at hospitals that are not capable of providing appropriate stroke care.

10 (d) The Department shall maintain within the Division of Health Service Regulation,  
11 Office of Emergency Services, a list of the hospitals designated as primary stroke centers in  
12 accordance with this section and post the list on the Department's Internet Web site. Annually  
13 on June 1, the Department shall transmit this list to the medical director of each licensed  
14 emergency medical services provider in this State.

15 (e) The Department may suspend or revoke a hospital's designation as a primary stroke  
16 center if the Department determines the hospital is not in compliance with any of the  
17 requirements specified in this section.

18 (f) A hospital may contest any adverse action taken by the Department on its  
19 designation as a primary stroke center in accordance with Chapter 150B of the General  
20 Statutes.

21 (g) Nothing in this section shall be construed to do any of the following:

22 (1) Establish a standard of medical practice for stroke patients.

23 (2) Restrict in any way the authority of any hospital to provide services  
24 authorized under its hospital license.

25 (h) The Department may adopt regulations to implement the provisions of this section.

26 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2013.