

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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SENATE BILL 371

Short Title: Patient Safety in Operating Rooms. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Bingham (Primary Sponsor); and J. Davis.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 20, 2013

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ENHANCE PATIENT SAFETY IN HOSPITAL AND AMBULATORY
3 SURGICAL FACILITY OPERATING ROOMS BY REQUIRING AT LEAST ONE
4 CIRCULATING NURSE TO BE PRESENT IN EACH OPERATING ROOM DURING
5 EACH SURGICAL PROCEDURE.

6 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

9 "Part 3A. Patient Safety.

10 **§ 131E-89. Circulating nurses required in operating rooms.**

11 (a) The following definitions apply in this section:

12 (1) Circulating nurse. – A registered nurse licensed to practice under Article 9A
13 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes who is educated and trained in
14 perioperative nursing.

15 (2) Perioperative nursing. – A specialized area of nursing practice that involves
16 the planning, coordination, delivery, and evaluation of nursing care to
17 patients whose protective reflexes or self-care abilities are potentially
18 compromised during surgical or other invasive procedures.

19 (b) In order to enhance patient safety and protection, the Commission shall adopt rules
20 to require each hospital licensed under this Article to have a minimum of one circulating nurse
21 physically present in each operating room for the duration of each surgical procedure to (i)
22 coordinate the nursing care and safety needs of patients in the operating room and (ii) support
23 the surgical team as appropriate during surgery.

24 (c) The Department shall not issue or renew a license under this Article unless the
25 applicant is in compliance with this section."

26 **SECTION 2.** Part 4 of Article 6 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes is
27 amended by adding a new section to read:

28 **§ 131E-153. Circulating nurses required in operating rooms.**

29 (a) The following definitions apply in this section:

30 (1) Circulating nurse. – A registered nurse licensed to practice under Article 9A
31 of Chapter 90 who is educated and trained in perioperative nursing.

32 (2) Perioperative nursing. – A specialized area of nursing practice that involves
33 the planning, coordination, delivery, and evaluation of nursing care to
34 patients whose protective reflexes or self-care abilities are potentially
35 compromised during surgical or other invasive procedures.



1 (b) In order to enhance patient safety and protection, the Commission shall adopt rules
2 to require each ambulatory surgical facility licensed under this Part to have a minimum of one
3 circulating nurse physically present in each operating room for the duration of each surgical
4 procedure to (i) coordinate the nursing care and safety needs of patients in the operating room
5 and (ii) support the surgical team as appropriate during surgery. As used in this section,
6 "circulating nurse" means a registered nurse licensed to practice under Chapter 90 of the
7 General Statutes who is educated and trained in perioperative nursing.

8 (c) The Department shall not issue or renew a license under this Part unless the
9 applicant is in compliance with this section.

10 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective October 1, 2013.