

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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SENATE BILL 456
Health Care Committee Substitute Adopted 4/11/13

Short Title: Designate Primary Stroke Centers.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

March 27, 2013

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; Now, therefore,
25 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

28 **"§ 131E-78.5. Designation as primary stroke center.**

29 (a) A hospital may apply to the Department for designation as a primary stroke center
30 utilizing application forms developed by, and in accordance with procedures established by, the
31 Department. The Department shall designate as a primary stroke center any hospital licensed
32 under this Article that submits an application demonstrating, to the satisfaction of the
33 Department, that the hospital is certified as a primary stroke center by the Joint Commission.

34 (b) Each hospital designated as a primary stroke center pursuant to this section shall
35 make efforts to coordinate the provision of appropriate acute stroke care with other hospitals
36 licensed in this State through a formal written agreement. The agreement shall, at a minimum,



1 address (i) transportation of acute stroke patients to hospitals designated as primary stroke
2 centers and (ii) acceptance by hospitals designated as primary stroke centers of acute stroke
3 patients initially treated at hospitals that are not capable of providing appropriate stroke care.

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

9 (d) A hospital licensed under this Article shall not advertise or hold the hospital out to
10 the public as a primary stroke center unless the Department has designated the hospital as a
11 primary stroke center pursuant to this section.

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

15 (f) A hospital may contest any adverse action taken by the Department regarding the
16 hospital's designation as a primary stroke center in accordance with Chapter 150B of the
17 General Statutes.

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

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

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

22 (h) The Department may adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section."

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