

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2017**

**SESSION LAW 2017-103**  
**HOUSE BILL 248**

AN ACT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE ADULT CARE HOME AND NURSING HOME ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO CONFORM TO THE ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING RULES AND RECENT CHANGES TO THE STATE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM AND TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO STUDY THE HOPE ACT AND RELATED FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.(a)** G.S. 131D-31 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 131D-31. Adult care home community advisory committees.**

(a) Statement of Purpose. – It is the intention of the General Assembly that community advisory ~~committees~~ committee members function as representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and through their designation work to maintain the intent of the Adult Care Home Residents' Bill of Rights within the licensed adult care homes in this State. It is the further intent of the General Assembly that the committees promote community involvement and cooperation with adult care homes to ensure quality care for the elderly and disabled adults.

(b) Establishment and Appointment of Committees. –

- (1) A community advisory committee shall be established in each county that has at least one licensed adult care home, shall serve all the homes in the county, and shall work with each of these homes for the best interests of the residents. In a county that has one, two, or three adult care homes with 10 or more beds, the committee shall have five members.
- (2) In a county with four or more adult care homes with 10 or more beds, the committee shall have one additional member for each adult care home with 10 or more beds in excess of three, and may have up to five additional members at the discretion of the county commissioners, not to exceed a maximum of 25 members. In each county with four or more adult care homes with 10 or more beds, the committee shall establish a subcommittee of no more than five members and no fewer than three members from the committee for each adult care home in the county. Each member must serve on at least one subcommittee.
- (3) In counties with no adult care homes with 10 or more beds, the committee shall have five members. Regardless of how many members a particular community advisory committee is required to have, at least one member of each committee shall be a person involved in the area of mental retardation.
- (4) The boards of county commissioners are encouraged to appoint the Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committees. Of the members, a minority (not less than one-third, but as close to one-third as possible) shall be chosen



from among persons nominated by a majority of the chief administrators of adult care homes in the county. If the adult care home administrators fail to make a nomination within 45 days after written notification has been sent to them requesting a nomination, these appointments may be made without nominations. If the county commissioners fail to appoint members to a ~~committee by July 1, 1983,~~ committee, the appointments shall be made by the ~~Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman~~ no sooner than 45 days after nominations have been requested from the adult care home administrators, but no later than October 1, 1983-administrators. In making appointments, the ~~Assistant Secretary for Aging~~ Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman shall follow the same appointment process as that specified for the County Commissioners.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, appointment to an Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee is contingent upon designation of the appointee by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman in accordance with G.S. 143B-181.18. A designated appointee is directly accountable to the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in order to perform the duties as a representative of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Removal of the appointee's designation by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman automatically rescinds the appointment to the Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee.

(6) Any individual who serves as a community advisory committee member must go through the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's certification and designation process and meet the certification and designation requirements in accordance with the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Policies and Procedures.

(c) Joint Nursing and Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committees. – Appointment to the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committees shall preclude appointment to the Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committees except where written approval to combine these committees is obtained from the ~~Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.~~ Where this approval is obtained, the Joint Nursing and Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee shall have the membership required of Nursing Home Community Advisory Committees and one additional member for each adult care home with 10 or more beds licensed in the county. In counties with no adult care homes with 10 or more beds, there shall be one additional member for every four other types of adult care homes in the county. In no case shall the number of members on the Joint Nursing and Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee exceed 25. Each member shall exercise the statutory rights and responsibilities of both Nursing Home Committees and Adult Care Home Committees. In making appointments to this joint committee, the county commissioners shall solicit nominations from both nursing and adult care home administrators for the appointment of approximately (but no more than) one-third of the members.

(d) Terms of Office. – Each committee member shall serve an initial term of one year. Any person reappointed to a second or subsequent term in the same county shall serve a two-or three-year term at the county commissioners' discretion to ensure staggered terms of office.

(e) Vacancies. – Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment of a person for a one-year term. If this vacancy is in a position filled by an appointee nominated by the chief administrators of adult care homes within the county, then the county commissioners shall fill the vacancy from persons nominated by a majority of the chief administrators. If the adult care home administrators fail to make a nomination by registered mail within 45 days after written

notification has been sent to them requesting a nomination, this appointment may be made without nominations. If the county commissioners fail to fill a vacancy, the vacancy ~~may~~shall be filled by the ~~Assistant Secretary for Aging, Department of Health and Human Services Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman~~ no sooner than 45 days after the commissioners have been notified of the appointment or vacancy.

(f) Officers. – The committee shall elect from its members a chair, to serve a one-year term.

(g) Minimum Qualifications for Appointment. – Each member must be a resident of the county which the committee serves. No person or immediate family member of a person with a financial interest in a home served by the committee, or employee or governing board member of a home served by the committee, or immediate family member of a resident in a home served by the committee may be a member of that committee. Any county commissioner who is appointed to the committee shall be deemed to be serving on the committee in an ex officio capacity. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties. The names of the committee members and the date of expiration of their terms shall be filed with the ~~Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services~~Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman.

(h) ~~Training~~Training, Certification, and Designation. – The ~~Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman~~ shall develop ~~training materials, which shall be distributed to each committee member~~training requirements for certification and designation in accordance with 45 C.F.R. § 1324.13(c)(2). Each committee member must receive certification training as specified by the Division of Aging State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Policies and Procedures and be designated as representatives of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program prior to exercising any power under G.S. 131D-32. The ~~Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program~~ shall provide the committees with information, guidelines, training, and consultation to direct them in the performance of their duties.

(i) Any written communication made by a member of adult care home advisory committee within the course and scope of the member's duties, as specified in G.S. 131D-32, shall be privileged to the extent provided in this subsection. All communication shall be considered the property of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and subject to the Office's disclosure policies. This privilege shall be a defense in a cause of action for libel if the member was acting in good faith and the statements and communications do not amount to intentional wrongdoing.

To the extent that any adult care home advisory committee or any member is covered by liability insurance, that committee or member shall be deemed to have waived the qualified immunity herein to the extent of indemnification by insurance."

**SECTION 1.(b)** G.S. 131E-128 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 131E-128. Nursing home advisory committees.**

(a) It is the purpose of the General Assembly that community advisory ~~committees~~committee members function as representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and through their designation work to maintain the intent of this Part the Nursing Home Resident's Bill of Rights within the nursing homes in this State, including nursing homes operated by hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E. It is the further purpose of the General Assembly that the committees promote community involvement and cooperation with nursing homes and an integration of these homes into a system of care for the elderly.

(b) (1) A community advisory committee shall be established in each county which has a nursing home, including a nursing home operated by a hospital licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, shall serve all the homes in

the county, and shall work with each home in the best interest of the persons residing in each home. In a county which has one, two, or three nursing homes, the committee shall have five members. In a county with four or more nursing homes, the committee shall have one additional member for each nursing home in excess of three, and may have up to five additional members per committee at the discretion of the county commissioners.

- (2) In each county with four or more nursing homes, the committee shall establish a subcommittee of no more than five members and no fewer than three members from the committee for each nursing home in the county. Each member must serve on at least one subcommittee.
- (3) ~~Each committee shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners.~~ Boards of county commissioners are encouraged to appoint the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committees. Of the members, a minority (not less than one-third, but as close to one-third as possible) must be chosen from among persons nominated by a majority of the chief administrators of nursing homes in the county and of the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes. If the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes fail to make a nomination within 45 days after written notification has been sent to them by the board of county commissioners requesting a nomination, these appointments may be made by the board of county commissioners without nominations.
- (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article, appointment to a nursing home community advisory committee is contingent upon designation of the appointee by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman in accordance with G.S. 143B-181.18. A designated appointee is directly accountable to the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program in order to perform the duties as a representative of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Removal of the appointee's designation by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman automatically rescinds the appointment to the nursing home community advisory committee.
- (5) Any individual who serves as a community advisory committee member must go through the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's certification and designation process and meet the certification and designation requirements in accordance with the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Policies and Procedures.

(c) Each committee member shall serve an initial term of one year. Any person reappointed to a second or subsequent term in the same county shall serve a three-year term. Persons who were originally nominees of nursing home chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes, or who were appointed by the board of county commissioners when the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes failed to make nominations, may not be reappointed without the consent of a majority of the nursing home chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes within the county. If the nursing home chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes fail to approve or reject the reappointment within 45 days of being requested by the board of county commissioners, the commissioners may reappoint the member if they so choose.

(d) Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment of a person for a one-year term. Any person replacing a member nominated by the chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes or a person appointed when the chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes failed to make a nomination shall be selected from among persons nominated by the administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes, as provided in subsection (b). If the county commissioners fail to appoint members to a committee, or fail to fill a vacancy, the appointment ~~may~~ shall be made or vacancy filled by the ~~Secretary or the Secretary's designee~~ Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman no sooner than 45 days after the commissioners have been notified of the appointment or vacancy if nomination or approval of the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes is not required. If nominations or approval of the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes is required, the appointment ~~may~~ shall be made or vacancy filled by the ~~Secretary or the Secretary's designee~~ Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman no sooner than 45 days after the commissioners have received the nomination or approval, or no sooner than 45 days after the 45-day period for action by the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes.

(e) The committee shall elect from its members a chair, to serve a one-year term.

(f) Each member must be a resident of the county which the committee serves. No person or immediate family member of a person with a financial interest in a home served by a committee, or employee or governing board member or immediate family member of an employee or governing board member of a home served by a committee, or immediate family member of a patient in a home served by a committee may be a member of a committee. Membership on a committee shall not be considered an office as defined in G.S. 128-1 or G.S. 128-1.1. Any county commissioner who is appointed to the committee shall be deemed to be serving on the committee in an ex officio capacity. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for the amount of actual expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties. The names of the committee members and the date of expiration of their terms shall be filed with the ~~Division of Aging~~, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, which shall supply a copy to the Division of Health Service Regulation.

(g) ~~The Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman shall develop training materials which shall be distributed to each committee member and nursing home.~~ requirements for certification and designation in accordance with 45 C.F.R. § 1324.13(c)(2). Each committee member must receive certification training as specified by the Division of Aging State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Policies and Procedures and be designated as representatives of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program prior to exercising any power under subsection (h) of this section. The Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program shall provide the committees with information, guidelines, training, and consultation to direct them in the performance of their duties.

(h) (1) Each committee shall apprise itself of the general conditions under which the persons are residing in the homes, and shall work for the best interests of the persons in the homes. This may include assisting persons who have grievances with the home and facilitating the resolution of grievances at the local level.

- (2) Each committee shall quarterly visit the nursing home it serves. For each official quarterly visit, a majority of the committee members shall be present. In addition, each committee may visit the nursing home it serves whenever it deems it necessary to carry out its duties. In counties with four or more nursing homes, the subcommittee assigned to a home shall perform the duties of the committee under this subdivision, and a majority of the subcommittee members must be present for any visit.
- (3) Each member of a committee shall have the right ~~between 10:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.~~ to enter into the facility the committee serves in order to carry out the members' responsibilities. In a county where subcommittees have been established, this right of access shall be limited to homes served by those subcommittees to which the member has been appointed.
- (4) The committee or subcommittee may communicate through its chair with the Department or any other agency in relation to the interest of any patient. The identity of any complainant or resident involved in a complaint shall not be disclosed except as permitted under the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq.
- (5) Each home shall cooperate with the committee as it carries out its duties.
- (6) Before entering into any nursing home, the committee, subcommittee, or member shall identify itself to the person present at the facility who is in charge of the facility at that time.

(i) Any written communication made by a member of a nursing home advisory committee within the course and scope of the member's duties, as specified in G.S. 131E-128, shall be privileged to the extent provided in this subsection. All communication shall be considered the property of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman and subject to the Office's disclosure policies. This privilege shall be a defense in a cause of action for libel if the member was acting in good faith and the statements or communications do not amount to intentional wrongdoing.

To the extent that any nursing home advisory committee or any member thereof is covered by liability insurance, that committee or member shall be deemed to have waived the qualified immunity herein to the extent of indemnification by insurance."

**SECTION 1.(c)** G.S. 143B-181.18 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 143B-181.18. Office of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program/State Ombudsman duties.**

The State Ombudsman shall perform the duties provided below:

- (1) Promote community involvement with long-term care providers and residents of long-term care facilities and serve as liaison between residents, residents' families, facility personnel, and facility administration.
- (2) Supervise the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program pursuant to rules adopted by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to G.S. 143B-10.
- (3) Certify regional ombudsmen. Certification requirements shall include an internship, training in the aging process, complaint resolution, long-term care issues, mediation techniques, recruitment and training of volunteers, and relevant federal, State, and local laws, policies, and standards.
- (3a) Designate certified Regional Ombudsmen as representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman ~~Office~~ as well as refuse, suspend, or remove designation as a representative of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman in accordance with the ~~Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program~~ Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Policies and Procedures.

- (3b) Designate and refuse, suspend, or remove designation of volunteer representatives of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, including any community advisory committee appointees, in accordance with the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program Policies and Procedures.
- (4) Attempt to resolve complaints made by or on behalf of individuals who are residents of long-term care facilities, which complaints relate to administrative action that may adversely affect the health, safety, or welfare of residents.
- (5) Provide training and technical assistance to regional ombudsmen.
- (6) Establish procedures for appropriate access by regional ombudsmen to long-term care facilities and residents' files, records, and other information, including procedures to protect the confidentiality of these files, records, and other information and to ensure that the identity of any complainant or resident will not be disclosed except as permitted under the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq. and regulations promulgated thereunder.
- (7) Analyze data relating to complaints and conditions in long-term care facilities to identify significant problems and recommend solutions.
- (8) Prepare an annual report containing data and findings regarding the types of problems experienced and complaints reported by residents as well as recommendations for resolutions of identified long-term care issues.
- (9) Prepare findings regarding public education and community involvement efforts and innovative programs being provided in long-term care facilities.
- (10) Provide information to public agencies, and through the State Ombudsman, to legislators, and others regarding problems encountered by residents or providers as well as recommendations for resolution.
- (11) Provide leadership for statewide systems advocacy efforts of the Office on behalf of long-term care residents, including independent determinations and positions that shall not be required to represent the position of the State agency or other agency within which the Ombudsman Program is organizationally located. Provide coordination of systems advocacy efforts with representatives of the Office as outlined in Ombudsman Policies and Procedures.
- (12) To the extent required to meet the requirement of the Older Americans Act and regulations promulgated thereunder regarding allotments for Vulnerable Elder Rights Protection Activities, the State Ombudsman and representatives of the Office are excluded from any State lobbying prohibitions under requirements to conduct systems advocacy on behalf of long-term care residents.
- (13) Determine the use of the fiscal resources as required by 42 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq. and regulations promulgated thereunder."

**SECTION 2.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall examine P.L. 113-51, HIV Organ Policy Equity (HOPE) Act, and the Final Safeguards and Research Criteria publication by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Institutes of Health to determine public health safeguards, regulations, and statutory changes necessary for consideration by the General Assembly. The Department shall submit a report of findings and recommendations, including any necessary statutory changes, to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services on or before January 1, 2018.

**SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 29<sup>th</sup> day of June,  
2017.

s/ Daniel J. Forest  
President of the Senate

s/ Tim Moore  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

s/ Roy Cooper  
Governor

Approved 1:53 p.m. this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2017