

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
1973 SESSION

CHAPTER 1240
SENATE BILL 1247

AN ACT TO CREATE A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE PERINATAL HEALTH CARE IN THIS STATE AND TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO IMPROVE THE FACILITIES AND SERVICES RELATED TO PRENATAL CARE DELIVERY AND NEWBORN CARE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Chapter 143 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to be entitled "Perinatal Health Care" and to read as follows:

"Perinatal Health Care.

"Section 1. Purpose. Based upon the report of the Task Force on Maternal-Infant Care of the Governor's Advisory Council on Comprehensive Health Planning, the General Assembly finds and recognizes the following problems related to maternal and infant health care in North Carolina: Perinatal mortality and morbidity rates are excessively high; low socio-economic status contributes significantly to perinatal mortality and morbidity; existing perinatal health services are inconsistently planned, organized and delivered; many perinatal health facilities are too small, inefficient and underutilized; perinatal education is inadequate; no guidelines exist for assessing perinatal care services; financial support for perinatal services for medically indigent mothers is insufficient; and health insurance maternity coverage is restrictive. The General Assembly finds that these problems can be alleviated by a program of regionalized perinatal care which is to include hospital certification, coordination of other pertinent health care resources, and funding. For purposes of this program the perinatal period is defined as beginning with conception and extending through the first 28 days of life.

"Sec. 2. Establishment of program. The Secretary of the Department of Human Resources is authorized and directed to establish a perinatal health care program with the following components as outlined in the report of the Task Force on Maternal-Infant Care:

(a) Community perinatal health care services, including health education for pregnant girls of school age, increased prenatal care, identification of high risk pregnancies, and increased interconceptional care.

(b) Hospital perinatal health care, including a voluntary certification system for hospitals providing for graduated levels of complexity: level I hospitals to provide normal obstetric and neonatal care, level II hospitals to provide the more complicated obstetric and neonatal care, and level III hospitals to provide care for the most complicated maternal and neonatal problems.

(c) Regionalized perinatal health care services, including a plan for effective communication, consultation, referral and transportation links among hospitals, health departments, physicians, schools and other relevant community resources for mothers and infants at high risk for preventable mortality and morbidity.

"Sec. 3. Powers and duties of Secretary. The Secretary is authorized to establish procedures and guidelines for the development, implementation and evaluation of this program. He may make contracts with hospitals, local health departments, and other public or private and governmental or non-governmental agencies and organizations to develop, implement and evaluate this program, including for the purposes of renovating and equipping hospitals and other health care facilities, salaries for health care professionals at such hospitals and facilities

and for patient care reimbursement. He shall request the appropriate areawide health planning agencies for review and comments on any proposed contract involving purchase of perinatal health services in an area.

"Sec. 4. Statewide Advisory Council. The Secretary shall appoint a Perinatal Health Program Advisory Council composed of 10 members with representation as follows: obstetrics, pediatrics, public health, nursing, social services, hospital administration and consumers. The Council shall advise the Secretary in the planning, organization, administration and evaluation of the program. The Council shall annually elect a chairman from among its members and shall meet quarterly or upon the call of the Secretary.

"Sec. 5. Coordination of existing programs. All State agencies concerned with maternal and child health shall cooperate with this program and the Secretary shall coordinate funding and administration in the Department consistent with the objectives of this and other programs."

Sec. 2. There is hereby appropriated from the General Fund the following sums to the Department of Human Resources for the fiscal year 1974-75 to establish a Perinatal Health Care Program consisting of grants-in-aid, medical assistance, contractual services, and administration as follows:

\$231,280	Grants-in-aid to hospitals for mechanical and electrical renovation and equipment purchases for the purpose of meeting hospital perinatal health care certification standards, such grants to be on a State /local matching basis of not more than four to one and not to exceed ninety-five thousand dollars (\$95,000) for any hospital grantee; and grants-in-aid to certified hospitals for support of salaries for health care personnel who are employed in providing perinatal health care services, not to exceed forty thousand dollars (\$40,000) for any hospital grantee.
198,720	Funds for medical assistance for perinatal care to persons whose care is not covered by commercial, governmental, or other health insurance and whose income or resources are inadequate to pay for that care. Eligibility shall be determined by standards established by the Department of Human Resources.
30,000	Contractual services for program development and evaluation, such contracts to be let under rules and regulations of the Department of Administration.
40,000	Administrative expenses for program implementation in Department of Human Resources.
<hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> \$500,000 Total	

Sec. 3. This act shall become effective on July 1, 1974.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified, this the 10th day of April, 1974.