



HOUSE BILL 258: Amend Medical Malpractice Health Care Provider Definition.

2017-2018 General Assembly

Committee:		Date:	August 3, 2017
Introduced by:		Prepared by:	Jason Moran-Bates Staff Attorney
Analysis of:	S.L. 2017-131		

OVERVIEW: *S.L. 2017-131 applies statutory medical malpractice requirements to lawsuits seeking damages from paramedics arising out of the provision of health care services.*

This act became effective July 20, 2017, and applies to causes of action arising on or after that date.

CURRENT LAW: In a medical malpractice action, the plaintiff must meet substantive and procedural requirements under Article 1B of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes that are more demanding than those governing ordinary negligence actions.¹ These heightened requirements apply to actions seeking damages for personal injury or death resulting from furnishing or failing to furnish professional health care services by a "health care provider," as statutorily defined.

Paramedics² are not included within the current definition of "health care provider" applicable to medical malpractice actions. As a consequence, lawsuits against a paramedic seeking damages arising from the paramedic's furnishing or failing to furnish professional health care services are currently governed by ordinary negligence law requirements.

BILL ANALYSIS: S.L. 2017-131 amends the definition of health care provider in Article 1B of Chapter 90 to include paramedics. As a result, the requirements governing medical malpractice actions will apply in lawsuits against paramedics for personal injury or death arising from furnishing or failure to furnish professional health care services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This act became effective July 20, 2017, and applies to causes of action arising on or after that date.

¹ Among other requirements, the plaintiff in a medical malpractice action:

- Must certify in the complaint that a person reasonably expected to qualify as an expert witness has reviewed all reasonably available relevant medical records and is willing to testify in support of the claim.
- Must prove that the defendant failed to provide the level of care that would have been provided by a similarly educated and trained health care provider from a similar community under similar circumstances, and in actions arising out of emergency care, must prove this by clear and convincing evidence.
- Can recover no more than \$500,000 in noneconomic damages, with certain exceptions.
- Must prove that the health care provider's conduct amounted to gross negligence, wanton conduct, or intentional wrongdoing if the medical care at issue was provided voluntarily without expectation of compensation.

² "Paramedic" is defined in G.S. 131E-155(15a) as an individual credentialed as a paramedic by Department of Health and Human Services after completing a Department-approved educational program in emergency medical care.

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