

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 139

Short Title: Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative L. Bell.

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: Health, if favorable, Judiciary III

February 22, 2017

1 **A BILL TO BE ENTITLED**
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE MENTAL HEALTH WORKERS' BILL OF RIGHTS.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** Chapter 122C of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
5 Article to read:

6 "Article 8."

7 "Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights."

8 **§ 122C-35. Findings.**

9 The General Assembly finds that mental health workers employed to carry out the provisions
10 of this Chapter provide care for people with special needs and that to provide quality care there
11 must be some basic rights and standards that every mental health worker has a right to expect.

12 **§ 122C-36. Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights.**

13 It is the policy of this State that the core elements of the Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights
14 for workers employed to carry out the provisions of this Chapter shall include all of the following:

- 15 (1) The right to a safe workplace, including protecting oneself from harm with
16 consideration for the safety of the patients, and the right to refuse work that
17 poses a danger to one's health and safety.
- 18 (2) The right to adequate staffing levels.
- 19 (3) The right to adequate and updated equipment and techniques to insure safer
20 working conditions and quality care for the patients.
- 21 (4) The right to family-supporting wages so that mental health care workers can
22 devote their time to the care of their patients and not have to take on second
23 jobs.
- 24 (5) The right to refuse excessive overtime.
- 25 (6) The right to a timely briefing about the behaviors of patients that workers are
26 assigned to care for.
- 27 (7) The right to be treated with respect and dignity regardless of job classification.
- 28 (8) The right to fair and equal treatment and opportunities regardless of race,
29 gender, age, national origin, immigration, sexual orientation, disabilities,
30 physical abilities, or religion."

31 **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.

