

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2003

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HOUSE BILL 978

Short Title: Veterinary Bd. Agreements/Impaired Vets. (Public)

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Sponsors: Representatives Cole; Gillespie, Goforth, and Hill.

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Referred to: Occupational Safety and Health.

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April 9, 2003

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT ALLOWING THE NORTH CAROLINA VETERINARY BOARD TO  
3 ENTER INTO AGREEMENTS WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE  
4 DEVELOPED PROGRAMS FOR IMPAIRED VETERINARY PERSONNEL.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** Article 11 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by  
7 adding a new section to read:

8 **"§ 90-187.15. Board agreement for programs for impaired veterinary personnel.**

9 (a) The Board may enter into agreements with organizations that have developed  
10 programs for impaired veterinary personnel. Activities to be covered by these  
11 agreements may include investigation, review, and evaluation of records, reports,  
12 complaints, litigation, and other information about the practices or the practice patterns  
13 of veterinary personnel licensed or registered by the Board as these matters may relate  
14 to impaired veterinary personnel. Organizations having programs for impaired  
15 veterinary personnel may include a statewide supervisory committee or various regional  
16 or local components or subgroups.

17 (b) Agreements authorized under this section shall include provisions for the  
18 impaired veterinary personnel organizations to: (i) receive relevant information from the  
19 Board and other sources; (ii) conduct any investigation, review, or evaluation in an  
20 expeditious manner; (iii) provide assurance of confidentiality of nonpublic information  
21 and of the process; (iv) make reports of investigations and evaluations to the Board; and  
22 (v) implement any other related activities for operating and promoting a coordinated and  
23 effective process. The agreement shall include provisions assuring basic due process for  
24 veterinary personnel who become involved.

25 (c) Organizations entering into agreements with the Board shall establish and  
26 maintain a program for impaired veterinary personnel licensed or registered by the  
27 Board for the purpose of identifying, reviewing, and evaluating the ability of those  
28 veterinarians or veterinary technicians to function as veterinarians or veterinary  
29 technicians and provide programs for treatment and rehabilitation. The Board may

1 provide funds for the administration of these impaired veterinary personnel peer review  
2 programs. The Board may adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 150B of the General Statutes  
3 to apply to the operation of impaired veterinary personnel programs, with provisions  
4 for: (i) definitions of impairment; (ii) guidelines for program elements; (iii) procedures  
5 for receipt and use of information of suspected impairment; (iv) procedures for  
6 intervention and referral; (v) arrangements for monitoring treatment, rehabilitation,  
7 posttreatment support, and performance; (vi) reports of individual cases to the Board;  
8 (vii) periodic reporting of statistical information; (viii) assurance of confidentiality of  
9 nonpublic information and of the process; and (ix) other necessary measures.

10 (d) Upon investigation and review of a veterinarian licensed by the Board or a  
11 veterinary technician registered with the Board, or upon receipt of a complaint or other  
12 information, an impaired veterinary personnel organization that enters into an  
13 agreement with the Board shall report to the Board detailed information about any  
14 veterinarian licensed or veterinary technician registered by the Board if:

15 (1) The veterinarian or veterinary technician constitutes an imminent  
16 danger to the public, to patients, or to himself or herself.

17 (2) The veterinarian or veterinary technician refuses to cooperate with the  
18 program, refuses to submit to treatment, or is still impaired after  
19 treatment and exhibits professional incompetence.

20 (3) It reasonably appears that there are other grounds for disciplinary  
21 action.

22 (e) Any confidential information or other nonpublic information acquired,  
23 created, or used in good faith by an impaired veterinary personnel organization or the  
24 Board regarding a participant pursuant to this section shall remain confidential and shall  
25 not be subject to discovery or subpoena in a civil case, nor subject to disclosure as a  
26 public document by the Board pursuant to Chapter 132A of the General Statutes. No  
27 person participating in good faith in an impaired veterinary personnel program  
28 developed under this section shall be required in a civil case to disclose any  
29 information, including opinions, recommendations, or evaluations, acquired or  
30 developed solely in the course of participating in the program.

31 (f) Impaired veterinary personnel activities conducted in good faith pursuant to  
32 any program developed under this section shall not be grounds for civil action under the  
33 laws of this State, and the activities deemed to be State-directed and sanctioned shall  
34 constitute "State action" for the purposes of application of antitrust laws."

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