

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS45564-MGa-196

Short Title: Cancer Research/Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Sawyer (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADVISORY  
3 PANEL ON CANCER RESEARCH AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR THIS  
4 PURPOSE.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 SECTION 1. G.S. 130A-208 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 130A-208. Central cancer ~~registry~~ registry; powers and duties.**

8 A central cancer registry is established within the Department. The central cancer registry  
9 shall ~~compile~~, have the following powers and duties:

- 10 (1) Compile, tabulate and preserve statistical, ~~clinical-clinical~~, and other reports  
11 and records pursuant to this Part relating to the incidence, ~~treatment~~ treatment,  
12 and cure of ~~cancer received pursuant to this Part. The central cancer registry~~  
13 shall provide cancer.  
14 (2) Provide assistance and consultation for public health work.  
15 (3) Serve as the lead agency for cancer cluster inquiries and investigations in  
16 North Carolina, as provided in G.S. 130A-208.5."

17 SECTION 2. Part 1 of Article 7 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes is amended  
18 by adding the following new sections to read:

19 "**§ 130A-208.5. Lead agency for cancer cluster investigations.**

20 As the lead agency for cancer cluster investigations in North Carolina, the central cancer  
21 registry shall oversee the coordination of State-level efforts and activities related to cancer cluster  
22 inquiries and investigations, including efforts and activities by the Occupational and  
23 Environmental Epidemiology Branch and the Department of Environmental Quality, in a way  
24 that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness.

25 "**§ 130A-208.6. Cancer epidemiologist.**

26 (a) The central cancer registry shall employ and retain an epidemiologist with  
27 knowledge, training, and experience in cancer epidemiology, including cancer cluster  
28 investigations, whose primary responsibility shall be to coordinate and communicate State-level  
29 cancer cluster activities. To fulfill this primary responsibility, the cancer epidemiologist shall  
30 have the following duties and powers:

- 31 (1) Lead State-level cancer cluster inquiries and investigations in collaboration  
32 with the Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch and the  
33 Department of Environmental Quality, as appropriate.  
34 (2) Serve as the single designated point of contact for State-level cancer cluster  
35 activities.  
36 (3) Conduct routine cancer surveillance activities.



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- 1           (4)    Proactively monitor cancer rates statewide, including analyzing patterns of  
2           cancer incidence over geographic areas and time.
- 3           (5)    Lead in the development, ongoing review, and updating of the statewide  
4           cancer cluster protocol established pursuant to G.S. 130A-208.7, with  
5           assistance from the Advisory Committee.
- 6           (6)    Develop and disseminate reports.

7    "**§ 130A-208.7. Enhanced statewide cancer cluster protocol.**

8           The central cancer registry, in collaboration with the cancer epidemiologist described in  
9    G.S. 130A-208.6, shall establish and periodically update an enhanced statewide cancer cluster  
10 protocol for addressing suspected cancer clusters within the State. The protocol shall be based  
11 on the most current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for public  
12 health agencies to assess and respond to potential cancer clusters. At a minimum, the protocol  
13 shall incorporate all of the following:

- 14           (1)    Best practices for all phases of cancer cluster assessment, including (i)  
15           surveillance for identifying new cancer cases and monitoring trends, (ii)  
16           inquiries, and (iii) detection and investigation.
- 17           (2)    State and local infrastructure needs.
- 18           (3)    Innovative statistical methods, software tools, and analytic approaches for  
19           analyzing cancer rates and detecting cancer clusters.
- 20           (4)    A comprehensive plan for internal communication within the Department, as  
21           well as external communication with local health departments, the  
22           community, the media, and other stakeholders."

23           **SECTION 3.(a)** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of  
24 Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of three hundred fourteen  
25 thousand seven hundred seventy-seven dollars (\$314,777) in recurring funds for the 2022-2023  
26 fiscal year to be used as follows:

- 27           (1)    \$97,911 in recurring funds to create one full-time equivalent Cancer  
28           Epidemiologist position within the central cancer registry dedicated to cancer  
29           cluster investigations.
- 30           (2)    \$84,890 in recurring funds to create one full-time equivalent Public Health  
31           Educator II position within the Occupational and Environmental  
32           Epidemiology Branch dedicated to assisting the Department of Health and  
33           Human Services and local health departments with communications during  
34           cancer cluster investigations and as the results of these investigations are made  
35           available to local health departments, the media, and the general public.
- 36           (3)    \$131,976 in recurring funds to create two full-time equivalent Certified Tumor  
37           Registrar positions within the central cancer registry dedicated to coordinating  
38           outreach, communication, and onboarding with physician practices to  
39           improve cancer case identification across the State. These positions shall be  
40           responsible for (i) designing and implementing an onboarding and training  
41           program to support increased compliance with State-mandated cancer case  
42           reporting requirements imposed on physician practices, (ii) providing training  
43           and, when necessary, retraining on cancer case reporting to physician practice  
44           staff, including case entry into a web-based application developed by the CDC  
45           and maintained by the central cancer registry information technology staff,  
46           and (iii) monitoring compliance with State-mandated cancer case reporting  
47           requirements.

48           **SECTION 3.(b)** The funds appropriated in this section to create full-time equivalent  
49 positions shall not be used to supplant any other source of funding for these positions.

50           **SECTION 4.** Section 3 of this act becomes effective July 1, 2022. The remainder of  
51 this act becomes effective October 1, 2022.