

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

FILED SENATE
Mar 22, 2023
S.B. 361
PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS55041-MG-36B

Short Title: Stop Addiction Fraud Ethics Act of 2023. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Burgin, Mayfield, and Corbin (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE STOP ADDICTION FRAUD ETHICS (SAFE) ACT OF 2023.
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Stop Addiction Fraud
5 Ethics Act of 2023" or the "SAFE Act of 2023."

6 **SECTION 2.** Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new Article
7 to read:

8 "Article 5H.

9 "Stop Addiction Fraud Ethics Act.

10 **"§ 90-113.150. Definitions.**

11 The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 12 (1) Patient. – An individual who will potentially be admitted to or receive services
13 from, or who is admitted to or receiving services from, or has been admitted
14 to or received services from, a treatment provider or recovery residence.
15 (2) Recovery residence. – A shared living environment that is, or is intended to
16 be, free from alcohol and illicit drug use and centered on peer support and
17 connection to services that promote sustained recovery from substance use
18 disorders.
19 (3) Referral. – A person or entity shall be considered to have made a referral if
20 the provider or operator of a recovery residence has informed a patient by any
21 means of the name, address, or other identifying information for a licensed
22 treatment provider or recovery residence.
23 (4) Treatment facility. – A facility or program that is, or is required to be, licensed,
24 accredited, or certified to provide substance use disorder treatment services.
25 (5) Treatment provider. – A person or entity that is, or is required to be, licensed,
26 accredited, or certified to provide substance use disorder treatment services.
27 For purposes of this Article, the term includes treatment facilities.

28 **"§ 90-113.151. Truth in marketing.**

29 (a) Any marketing or advertising materials published or provided by any treatment
30 provider, treatment facility, recovery residence, or third party providing services to any treatment
31 provider, treatment facility, or recovery residence shall convey accurate and complete
32 information, in plain language that is easy to understand, and shall include all of the following:

- 33 (1) Information about the types and methods of services provided or used, and
34 information about where they are provided, using the categories of treatment
35 and levels of care described in the American Society of Addiction Medicine,
36 Patient Placement Criteria, Revised.



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1 (2) The average lengths of stay at the treatment facility during the preceding
2 12-month period for each of the categories of treatment and levels of care
3 referenced in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

4 (3) The treatment facility's name and brand.

5 (4) A brief summary of any financial relationships between the treatment facility
6 and any publisher of marketing or advertising.

7 (b) Each operator of a recovery residence or licensed residential treatment facility that
8 also provides separately licensed outpatient substance use disorder services shall clearly (i) label
9 each facility and service separately in any marketing or advertising material published or
10 provided by the operator and (ii) distinguish the recovery residence or licensed residential
11 treatment facility from the licensed outpatient substance use disorder services.

12 (c) It is unlawful for any treatment provider, treatment facility, recovery residence, or
13 third party providing services to any treatment provider, treatment facility, or recovery residence
14 to do any of the following:

15 (1) Make a materially false or misleading statement, or provide false or
16 misleading information, about the nature, identity, or location of substance use
17 disorder treatment services or a recovery residence in advertising materials,
18 on a call line, on an internet website, or in any other marketing materials.

19 (2) Make a false or misleading statement about the following:

20 a. The treatment provider's status as an in-network or out-of-network
21 provider.

22 b. The credentials, qualifications, or experiences of persons providing
23 treatment or services.

24 c. The rate of recovery or success in providing services.

25 (d) It is unlawful for any person or entity to do any of the following:

26 (1) To provide, or direct any other person or entity to provide, false or misleading
27 information about the identity of, or contact information for, any treatment
28 provider.

29 (2) To include false or misleading information about the internet website of any
30 treatment provider, or to surreptitiously direct or redirect the reader to another
31 internet website.

32 (3) To suggest or imply that a relationship with a treatment provider exists, unless
33 the treatment provider has provided express, written consent to indicate such
34 a relationship.

35 (4) To make a materially false or misleading statement about substance use
36 disorder treatment services.

37 (e) A violation of subsection (c) or (d) of this section constitutes an unfair or deceptive
38 trade practice under G.S. 75-1.1.

39 (f) Any person or entity that knowingly violates subsection (c) or (d) of this section shall
40 be guilty of a Class G felony. Each violation of subsection (c) or (d) of this section constitutes a
41 separate offense.

42 **"§ 90-113.152. Patient brokering and kickbacks.**

43 (a) It is unlawful for any person or entity, including a treatment provider, treatment
44 facility, recovery residence, or third party providing services to any of these persons or entities,
45 to do any of the following:

46 (1) Offer or pay anything of value, directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind, or
47 engage in any split-fee arrangement, in any form whatsoever, to induce the
48 referral of a patient or patronage to or from a treatment provider or laboratory.

49 (2) Solicit or receive anything of value, directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind,
50 or engage in any split-fee arrangement, in any form whatsoever, in return for
51 referring a patient or patronage to or from a treatment provider or laboratory.

1 (3) Solicit or receive anything of value, directly or indirectly, in cash or in kind,
2 or engage in any split-fee arrangement, in any form whatsoever, in return for
3 the acceptance or acknowledgment of treatment from a health care provider
4 or health care facility.

5 (4) Aid or abet any conduct that violates subdivisions (1) through (3) of this
6 subsection.

7 (b) This section does not apply to either of the following:

8 (1) Any discount, payment, waiver of payment, or payment practice that is
9 expressly authorized by 42 U.S.C. § 1320a-7b(b)(3) or any regulation adopted
10 under that statute.

11 (2) A reasonable contingency management technique or other reasonable
12 motivational incentive that is part of the treatment provided by an accredited,
13 licensed, or certified treatment provider.

14 (c) Liability under this section exists regardless of if a person has actual knowledge of
15 this section or specific intent to commit a violation of this section.

16 (d) A person who violates this section shall be guilty of a Class G felony. Each violation
17 of this section constitutes a separate offense.

18 "**§ 90-113.153. Exemptions.**

19 This Article does not apply to any of the following:

20 (1) A general hospital licensed under Article 5 of Chapter 131E of the General
21 Statutes.

22 (2) A hospital authority organized under Article 2 of Chapter 131E of the General
23 Statutes."

24 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective January 1, 2024, and applies to offenses
25 committed on or after that date.