

Article 7.

Regulation of Emergency Medical Services.

§ 131E-155. Definitions.

As used in this Article, unless otherwise specified:

- (1) "Ambulance" means any privately or publicly owned motor vehicle, aircraft, or vessel that is specially designed, constructed, or modified and equipped and is intended to be used for and is maintained or operated for the transportation of patients on the streets or highways, waterways or airways of this State.
- (2) Repealed by Session Laws 1997-443, s. 11A.129C.
- (3) Redesignated as subdivision (13a).
- (4) "Commission" means the North Carolina Medical Care Commission.
- (5) "Emergency medical dispatcher" means an emergency telecommunicator who has completed an educational program approved by the Department and has been credentialed as an emergency medical dispatcher by the Department.
- (6) "Emergency medical services" means services rendered by emergency medical services personnel in responding to improve the health and wellness of the community and to address the individual's need for emergency medical care within the scope of practice as defined by the North Carolina Medical Board in accordance with G.S. 143-514 in order to prevent loss of life or further aggravation of physiological or psychological illness or injury.
- (6a) "Emergency medical services instructor" means an individual who has completed educational requirements approved by the Department and has been credentialed as an emergency medical services instructor by the Department.
- (6b) "Emergency Medical Services Peer Review Committee" means a panel composed of EMS program representatives to be responsible for analyzing patient care data and outcome measures to evaluate the ongoing quality of patient care, system performance, and medical direction within the EMS system. The committee membership shall include physicians, nurses, EMS personnel, medical facility personnel, and county government officials. Review of medical records by the EMS Peer Review Committee is confidential and protected under G.S. 143-518. An EMS Peer Review Committee, its members, proceedings, records and materials produced, and materials considered shall be afforded the same protections afforded Medical Review Committees, their members, proceedings, records, and materials under G.S. 131E-95.
- (7) "Emergency medical services personnel" means all the personnel defined in subdivisions (5), (6a), (8), (9), (10), (12), (13), (14), and (15) of this section.

- (8) "Emergency medical services-nurse practitioner" means a registered nurse who is licensed to practice nursing in North Carolina and approved to perform medical acts by the North Carolina Medical Board and the North Carolina Board of Nursing. Upon successful completion of an orientation program conducted under the authority of the medical director and approved by the Department, emergency medical services-nurse practitioners shall be approved by the medical director to issue instructions to EMS personnel. These instructions shall be in accordance with protocols approved by the EMS system and Office of Emergency Medical Services and under the direction of the medical director.
- (9) "Emergency medical services-physician assistant" means a physician assistant who is licensed by the North Carolina Medical Board. Upon successful completion of an orientation program conducted under the authority of the medical director and approved by the Department, emergency medical services-physician assistants shall be approved by the medical director to issue instructions to EMS personnel. These instructions shall be in accordance with protocols approved by the EMS system and Office of Emergency Medical Services and under the direction of the medical director.
- (10) "Emergency medical technician" means an individual who has completed an educational program in emergency medical care approved by the Department and has been credentialed as an emergency medical technician by the Department.
- (11) Repealed by Session Laws 2003-392, s. 2(a), effective August 7, 2003.
- (12) "Emergency medical technician-intermediate" means an individual who has completed an educational program in emergency medical care approved by the Department and has been credentialed as an emergency medical technician-intermediate by the Department.
- (13) "Emergency medical technician-paramedic" means an individual who has completed an educational program in emergency medical care approved by the Department and has been credentialed as an emergency medical technician-paramedic by the Department.
- (13a) "EMS provider" means a firm, corporation or association which engages in or professes to provide emergency medical services.
- (14) "Medical responder" means an individual who has completed an educational program in emergency medical care and first aid approved by the Department and has been credentialed as a medical responder by the Department.
- (15) "Mobile intensive care nurse" means a registered nurse who is licensed to practice nursing in North Carolina and is approved by the medical director, following successful completion of an orientation program conducted under the authority of the medical director and approved by

the Department, to issue instructions to EMS personnel. These instructions shall be in accordance with protocols approved by the EMS system and Office of Emergency Medical Services and under the direction of the medical director.

- (16) "Patient" means an individual who is sick, injured, wounded, or otherwise incapacitated or helpless such that the need for some medical assistance might be anticipated.
- (17) "Practical examination" means a test where an applicant for credentialing as an emergency medical technician, medical responder, emergency medical technician-intermediate, or emergency medical technician-paramedic demonstrates the ability to perform specified emergency medical care skills. (1983, c. 775, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.129C; 2001-210, s. 1; 2003-392, s. 2(a).)

§ 131E-155.1. EMS Provider License required.

(a) No firm, corporation, or association shall furnish, operate, conduct, maintain, advertise, or otherwise engage in or profess to provide emergency medical services or transport patients upon the streets or highways, waterways, or airways in North Carolina unless a valid EMS Provider License has been issued by the Department.

(b) Before an EMS Provider License may be issued, the firm, corporation, or association seeking the license shall apply to the Department for this license. Application shall be made upon forms and according to procedures established by the Department. Prior to issuing an original or renewal EMS Provider License, the Department shall determine that the applicant meets all requirements for this license as set forth in this Article and in the rules adopted under this Article. EMS Provider Licenses shall be valid for a period specified by the Department, provided that the period shall be a minimum of four years unless action is taken under subsection (d) of this section.

(c) The Commission shall adopt rules setting forth the qualifications required for obtaining or renewing an EMS Provider License.

(d) The Department may deny, suspend, amend, or revoke an EMS Provider License in any case where the Department finds that there has been a substantial failure to comply with the provisions of this Article or the rules adopted under this Article. The Department's decision to deny, suspend, amend, or revoke an EMS Provider License may be appealed by the applicant or licensee pursuant to the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the Administrative Procedure Act.

(e) Operating as an EMS provider without a valid EMS Provider License is a Class 3 misdemeanor. Each day's operation as an EMS provider without a license is a separate offense. (1995, c. 413, s. 1; 2001-210, s. 1.)

§ 131E-156. Permit required to operate ambulance.

(a) No person, firm, corporation, or association, either as owner, agent, provider, or otherwise, shall furnish, operate, conduct, maintain, advertise, or otherwise engage in or profess to be engaged in the business or service of transporting patients upon the

streets or highways, waterways or airways in North Carolina unless a valid permit from the Department has been issued for each ambulance used in the business or service.

(b) Before a permit may be issued for a vehicle to be operated as an ambulance, the EMS provider shall apply to the Department for an ambulance permit. Application shall be made upon forms and according to procedures established by the Department. Prior to issuing an original or renewal permit for an ambulance, the Department shall determine that the vehicle for which the permit is issued meets all requirements as to equipment, design, supplies and sanitation as set forth in this Article and in the rules of the Commission and that the EMS provider has the credentialed personnel necessary to operate the ambulance in accordance with this Article. Permits issued for ambulances shall be valid for a period specified by the Department, not to exceed four years.

(c) Duly authorized representatives of the Department may issue temporary permits for vehicles not meeting required standards for a period not to exceed 60 days, when it determines the public interest will be served.

(d) When a permit has been issued for an ambulance as specified by this Article, the vehicle and records relating to the maintenance and operation of the vehicle shall be open to inspection by duly authorized representatives of the Department at all reasonable times. (1967, c. 343, s. 3; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; c. 1224, s. 1; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 2001-210, s. 1.)

§ 131E-157. Standards for equipment; inspection of equipment and supplies required for ambulances.

(a) The Commission shall adopt rules specifying equipment, sanitation, supply and design requirements for ambulances.

(b) The Department shall inspect each ambulance for compliance with the requirements set forth by the Commission and this Article when it deems an inspection is necessary. The Department shall maintain a record of the inspection.

(c) Upon a determination, based upon an inspection, that an ambulance fails to meet the requirements of this Article or rules adopted under this Article, the Department may deny, suspend, or revoke the permit for the ambulance concerned until these requirements are met. (1967, c. 343, s. 3; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; c. 1224, s. 1; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 2001-210, s. 1.)

§ 131E-158. Credentialed personnel required.

(a) Every ambulance when transporting a patient shall be occupied at a minimum by all of the following:

- (1) At least one emergency medical technician who shall be responsible for the medical aspects of the mission prior to arrival at the medical facility, assuming no other individual with higher credentials is available.
- (2) One medical responder who is responsible for the operation of the vehicle and rendering assistance to the emergency medical technician.

An ambulance owned and operated by a licensed health care facility that is used solely to transport sick or infirm patients with known nonemergency medical conditions

between facilities or between a residence and a facility for scheduled medical appointments is exempt from the requirements of this subsection.

(b) The Commission shall adopt rules setting forth exemptions to the requirements stated in (a) of this section applicable to situations where exemptions are considered by the Commission to be in the public interest. (1967, c. 343, s. 3; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; c. 725; c. 1224, s. 1; 1975, c. 612; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 1989, c. 300; 1997-443, s. 11A.129D; 2001-210, s. 1.)

§ 131E-159. Credentialing requirements.

(a) Individuals seeking credentials as an emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician-intermediate, emergency medical technician-paramedic, medical responder, emergency medical dispatcher, or emergency medical services instructor shall apply to the Department using forms prescribed by that agency. The Department's representatives shall examine the applicant by either written, practical, or written and practical examination. The Department shall issue appropriate credentials to the applicant who meets all the requirements set forth in this Article and the rules adopted for this Article and who successfully completes the examinations required for credentialing. Emergency medical technician, medical responder, emergency medical dispatcher, emergency medical technician-intermediate, emergency medical technician-paramedic, and emergency medical services instructor credentials shall be valid for a period not to exceed four years and may be renewed if the holder meets the requirements set forth in the rules of the Commission. The Department is authorized to revoke or suspend these credentials at any time it determines that the holder no longer meets the qualifications prescribed.

(b) The Commission shall adopt rules setting forth the qualifications required for credentialing of medical responders, emergency medical technicians, emergency medical technician-intermediates, emergency medical technician-paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, and emergency medical services instructors.

(c) Individuals currently credentialed as an emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician intermediate, emergency medical technician paramedic, medical responder, and emergency medical services instructor by the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians or by another state where the education/credentialing requirements have been approved for legal recognition by the Department of Health and Human Services, in accordance with rules promulgated by the Medical Care Commission, and who is either currently residing in North Carolina or affiliated with a permitted EMS provider offering service within North Carolina, may be eligible for credentialing as an emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician-intermediate, emergency medical technician-paramedic, medical responder, and emergency medical services instructor without examination. This credentialing shall be valid for a period not to exceed the length of the applicant's original credentialing or four years, whichever is less.

(d) An individual currently credentialed as an emergency medical dispatcher by a national credentialing agency, or by another state where the education/credentialing

requirements have been approved for legal recognition by the Department of Health and Human Services, in accordance with rules issued by the Medical Care Commission, and who is either currently residing in North Carolina or affiliated with an emergency medical dispatcher program approved by the Department of Health and Human Services offering service within North Carolina, may be eligible for credentialing as an emergency medical dispatcher without examination. This credentialing shall be valid for a period not to exceed the length of the applicant's original credentialing or four years, whichever is less.

(e) Duly authorized representatives of the Department may issue temporary credentials with or without examination upon finding that this action will be in the public interest. Temporary credentials shall be valid for a period not exceeding 90 days.

(f) The Department may deny, suspend, amend, or revoke the credentials of a medical responder, emergency medical technician, emergency medical technician-intermediate, emergency medical technician-paramedic, emergency medical dispatcher, or emergency medical services instructor in any case in which the Department finds that there has been a substantial failure to comply with the provisions of this Article or the rules issued under this Article. Prior to implementation of any of the above disciplinary actions, the Department shall consider the recommendations of the EMS Disciplinary Committee pursuant to G.S. 143-519. The Department's decision to deny, suspend, amend, or revoke credentials may be appealed by the applicant or credentialed personnel pursuant to the provisions of Article 3 of Chapter 150B of the General Statutes, the Administrative Procedure Act. (1967, c. 343, s. 3; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; c. 725; c. 1224, s. 1; 1975, c. 612; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 1987, c. 495, s. 2; 1993, c. 135, s. 1; 1997-443, ss. 11A.118(a), 11A.129E; 2001-210, s. 1; 2003-392, s. 2(b).)

§ 131E-160. Exemptions.

All of the following vehicles are exempt from the provisions of this Article:

- (1) Privately owned vehicles not used in the business of transporting patients.
- (2) A vehicle rendering service as an ambulance in case of a major catastrophe or emergency, when the permitted ambulances based in the locality of the catastrophe or emergency are insufficient to render the services required.
- (3) Any ambulance based outside this State, except that an ambulance which receives a patient within this State for transportation to a location within this State shall comply with the provisions of this Article.
- (4) Ambulances owned and operated by an agency of the United States government.
- (5) Vehicles owned and operated by rescue squads chartered by the State of North Carolina as nonprofit corporations or associations which are not regularly used to transport sick, injured, wounded or otherwise incapacitated or helpless persons except as a part of rescue operations. (1967, c. 343, s. 3; c. 1257, s. 2; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 2001-210, s. 1.)

§ 131E-161. Violation declared misdemeanor.

It shall be the responsibility of the EMS provider to ensure that the ambulance operation complies with the provisions of this Article and all rules adopted for this Article. Upon the violation of any part of this Article or any rule adopted under authority of this Article, the Department shall have the power to deny, revoke, or suspend the permits of all vehicles owned or operated by the violator. The operation of an ambulance without a valid permit or after a permit has been denied, suspended, or revoked or without appropriate credentialed staffing as required by G.S. 131E-158, shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor. (1967, c. 343, s. 3; 1973, c. 476, s. 128; 1983, c. 775, s. 1; 1993, c. 539, s. 964; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1997-443, s. 11A.129F; 2001-210, s. 1.)

Article 7A.

Statewide Trauma System Act of 1993.

§ 131E-162. Statewide trauma system.

The Department shall establish and maintain a program for the development of a statewide trauma system. The Department shall consolidate all State functions relating to trauma systems, both regulatory and developmental, under the auspices of this program.

The Commission shall adopt rules to carry out the purpose of this Article. These rules shall be adopted with the advice of the State Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council and shall include the operation of a statewide trauma registry, statewide educational requirements fundamental to the implementation of the trauma system. The rules adopted by the Commission shall establish guidelines for monitoring and evaluating the system including standards and criteria for the denial, suspension, voluntary withdrawal, or revocation of credentials for trauma center designation, and the establishment of regional trauma peer review committees. Each regional trauma peer review committee shall be responsible for analyzing trauma patient care data and outcome measures to evaluate the ongoing quality of patient care, system performance, and medical direction within the regional trauma system. The committee membership shall include physicians, nurses, EMS personnel, trauma registrars, and hospital administrators. Review of medical records by the Trauma Peer Review Committee is confidential and protected under G.S. 143-518. A Trauma Peer Review Committee, its members, proceedings, records and materials produced, and materials considered shall be afforded the same protections afforded Medical Review Committees, their members, proceedings, records, and materials under G.S. 131E-95. The rules adopted by the Commission shall avoid duplication of reporting and minimize the cost to hospitals or other persons reporting under this section. The Office of Emergency Medical Services shall be the agency responsible for monitoring system development, ensuring compliance with rules, and overseeing system effectiveness.

With respect to collection of data and educational requirements regarding trauma, rules adopted by the Medical Care Commission shall limit the authority of the Department to hospitals and Emergency Medical Services providers. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted so as to grant the Department authority to require private physicians, schools, or universities, except those participating in the trauma system, to provide information or data or to conduct educational programs regarding trauma. (1993, c. 336, s. 1; 2001-210, s. 2; 2003-392, s. 2(c).)

§ 131E-163. Reserved for future codification purposes.

§ 131E-164. Reserved for future codification purposes.

Article 56.

Emergency Medical Services Act of 1973.

§ 143-507. Establishment of Statewide Emergency Medical Services System.

(a) There is established a comprehensive Statewide Emergency Medical Services System in the Department of Health and Human Services. All responsibility for this System shall be vested in the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and other officers, boards, and commissions specified by law or regulation.

(b) The Statewide Medical Services System includes Emergency Medical Services and also includes first aid by members of the community; public knowledge and easy access into the system; prompt emergency medical dispatch of well-designed, equipped, and staffed ambulances; effective care by trained and credentialed personnel with appropriate disposition at the scene of the emergency and while in transit; communications with the treatment center while at the scene and while in transit; routing and referral to the appropriate treatment facility; injury prevention initiatives; wellness initiatives within the community and the public health system; and follow-up lifesaving and restorative care.

(c) The purpose of this Article is to enable and assist providers of Emergency Medical Services in the delivery of adequate emergency medical services for all people of North Carolina and the provision of medical care during a disaster.

(d) Emergency Medical Services as referred to in this Article include all services rendered by emergency medical services personnel as defined in G.S. 131E-155(7) in responding to improve the health and wellness of the community and to address the individual's need for immediate emergency medical care in order to prevent loss of life or further aggravation of physiological or psychological illness or injury. (1973, c. 208, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1.)

§ 143-508. Department of Health and Human Services to establish program; rules and regulations of North Carolina Medical Care Commission.

(a) The State Department of Health and Human Services shall establish and maintain a program for the improvement and upgrading of emergency medical services throughout the State. The Department shall consolidate all State functions relating to emergency medical services, both regulatory and developmental, under the auspices of this program.

(b) The North Carolina Medical Care Commission shall adopt, amend, and rescind rules to carry out the purpose of this Article and Articles 7 and 7A of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes regardless of other provisions of rule or law. These rules shall be adopted with the advice of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council. The Department of Health and Human Services shall enforce all rules adopted by the Commission. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to authorize the North Carolina Medical Care Commission to establish or modify the scope of practice of emergency medical personnel.

(c) The North Carolina Medical Care Commission may adopt rules with regard to emergency medical services, not inconsistent with the laws of this State, that may be required by the federal government for grants-in-aid for emergency medical services and licensure which may be made available to the State by the federal government. This section is to be liberally construed in order that the State and its citizens may benefit from such grants-in-aid.

(d) The North Carolina Medical Care Commission shall adopt rules to do all of the following:

- (1) Establish standards and criteria for the credentialing of emergency medical services agencies to carry out the purpose of Article 7 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes.
- (2) Establish standards and criteria for the credentialing of trauma centers to carry out the purpose of Article 7A of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes.
- (3) Establish standards and criteria for the education and credentialing of emergency medical services personnel to carry out the purpose of Article 7 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes.
- (4) Establish standards and criteria for the credentialing of EMS educational institutions to carry out the purpose of Article 7 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes.
- (5) Establish standards and criteria for data collection as part of the statewide emergency medical services information system to carry out the purpose of G.S. 143-509(5).
- (6) Implement the scope of practice of credentialed emergency medical services personnel as determined by the North Carolina Medical Board.
- (7) Define the practice settings of credentialed emergency medical services personnel.
- (8) Establish standards for vehicles and equipment used within the emergency medical services system.
- (9) Establish standards for a statewide EMS communications system.
- (10) Establish standards and criteria for the denial, suspension, or revocation of emergency medical services credentials for emergency medical services agencies, educational institutions, and personnel including the establishment of fines for credentialing violations.
- (11) Establish standards and criteria for the education and credentialing of persons trained to administer lifesaving treatment to a person who suffers a severe adverse reaction to agents that might cause anaphylaxis.
- (12) Establish standards for the voluntary submission of hospital emergency medical care data.
- (13) Establish occupational standards for EMS systems, EMS educational institutions, and specialty care transport programs. (1973, c. 208, s. 2; c. 1224, s. 2; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1; 2002-179, s. 13; 2003-392, s. 2(d).)

§ 143-509. Powers and duties of Secretary.

The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services has full responsibilities for supervision and direction of the emergency medical services program and, to that end, shall accomplish all of the following:

- (1) After consulting with the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council and with any local governments that may be involved, seek the establishment of a Statewide Emergency Medical Services System, integrated with other health care providers and networks including, but not limited to, public health, community health monitoring activities, and special needs populations.
- (2) Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 74.
- (3) Establish and maintain a comprehensive statewide trauma system in accordance with the provisions of Article 7A of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes and the rules of the North Carolina Medical Care Commission.
- (4) Establish and maintain a statewide emergency medical services communications system including designation of EMS radio frequencies and coordination of EMS radio communications networks within FCC rules and regulations.
- (5) Establish and maintain a statewide emergency medical services information system that provides information linkage between various public safety services and other health care providers.
- (6) Credential emergency medical services providers, vehicles, EMS educational institutions, and personnel after documenting that the requirements of the North Carolina Medical Care Commission are met.
- (7), (8) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-220, s. 1, effective January 1, 2002.
- (9) Promote a means of training individuals to administer life-saving treatment to persons who suffer a severe adverse reaction to agents that might cause anaphylaxis. Individuals, upon successful completion of this training program, may be approved by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission to administer epinephrine to these persons, in the absence of the availability of physicians or other practitioners who are authorized to administer the treatment. This training may also be offered as part of the emergency medical services training program.
- (10) Establish and maintain a collaborative effort with other community resources and agencies to educate the public regarding EMS systems and issues.
- (11) Collaborate with community agencies and other health care providers to integrate the principles of injury prevention into the Statewide EMS System to improve community health.
- (12) Establish and maintain a means of medical direction and control for the Statewide EMS System. (1973, c. 208, s. 3; 1981, c. 927; 1989, c. 74;

1995, c. 94, s. 34; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1; 2003-392, s. 2(e).)

§ 143-510. North Carolina Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council.

(a) There is created the North Carolina Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council to consult with the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in the administration of this Article.

The North Carolina Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council shall consist of 25 members.

- (1) Twenty-one of the members shall be appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services as follows:
 - a. Three of the members shall represent the North Carolina Medical Society and include one licensed pediatrician, one surgeon, and one public health physician.
 - b. Three members shall represent the North Carolina College of Emergency Physicians, two of whom shall be current local EMS Medical Directors.
 - c. One member shall represent the North Carolina Chapter of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma.
 - d. One member shall represent the North Carolina Association of Rescue and Emergency Medical Services.
 - e. One member shall represent the North Carolina Association of EMS Administrators.
 - f. One member shall represent the North Carolina Hospital Association.
 - g. One member shall represent the North Carolina Nurses Association.
 - h. One member shall represent the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.
 - i. One member shall represent the North Carolina Medical Board.
 - j. One member shall represent the American Heart Association, North Carolina Council.
 - k. One member shall represent the American Red Cross.
 - l. The remaining six members shall be appointed so as to fairly represent the general public, credentialed and practicing EMS personnel, EMS educators, local public health officials, and other EMS interest groups in North Carolina.
- (2) Two members shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (3) Two members shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

The membership of the Council shall, to the extent possible, reflect the gender and racial makeup of the population of the State.

(b) The members of the Council appointed pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall serve initial terms as follows:

- (1) The members appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services shall serve initial terms as follows:
 - a. Five members shall serve initial terms of one year;
 - b. Five members shall serve initial terms of two years;
 - c. Five members shall serve initial terms of three years; and
 - d. Six members shall serve initial terms of four years.
- (2) The members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate shall serve initial terms as follows:
 - a. One member shall serve an initial term of two years; and
 - b. One member shall serve an initial term of four years.
- (3) The members appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House of the Representatives shall serve initial terms as follows:
 - a. One member shall serve an initial term of two years; and
 - b. One member shall serve an initial term of four years. Thereafter, all terms shall be four years.

(c) Any appointment to fill a vacancy on the Council created by the resignation, dismissal, death, or disability of a member shall be for the balance of the unexpired term. Vacancies on the Council among the membership nominated by a society, association, or foundation as provided in subsection (a) of this section shall be filled by appointment of the Secretary upon consideration of a nomination by the executive committee or other authorized agent of the society, association, or foundation until the next meeting of the society, association, or foundation at which time the society, association, or foundation shall nominate a member to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

(d) The members of the Council shall receive per diem and necessary travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 138-5.

(e) A majority of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. All clerical and other services required by the Council shall be supplied by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Facility Services, Office of Emergency Medical Services.

(f) The Council shall elect annually from its membership a chairperson and vice-chairperson upon a majority vote of the quorum present. (1973, c. 208, s. 4; 1977, c. 509; 1991, c. 739, s. 24; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1; 2003-392, s. 2(f).)

§ 143-511. Powers and duties of the Council.

The North Carolina Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council may advise the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services on policy issues regarding the Statewide Emergency Medical Services System, including all rules proposed to be adopted by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission. (1973, c. 208, s. 5; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1.)

§ 143-512. Regional demonstration plans.

The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services may develop and implement, in conjunction with any local sponsors that may agree to participate, regional emergency medical services systems in order to demonstrate the desirability of comprehensive regional emergency medical services systems and to determine the optimum characteristics of such plans. The Secretary may make special grants-in-aid to participants. (1973, c. 208, s. 6; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1.)

§ 143-513. Regional emergency medical services councils.

The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services may establish emergency medical services regional councils to implement and coordinate emergency medical services programs within regions. (1973, c. 208, s. 7; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a).)

§ 143-514. Scope of practice for credentialed emergency medical services personnel.

The North Carolina Medical Board shall determine the scope of practice for credentialed emergency medical services personnel regardless of other provisions of law by establishing the medical skills and medications that may be used by credentialed emergency medical services personnel at each level of patient care. No provision of Article 56 of Chapter 143 or Article 7 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes shall be interpreted to require the North Carolina Medical Board to include any service within the scope of practice of any Emergency Medical Services provider, unless the North Carolina Medical Board determines that the emergency medical service personnel in question have the experience and training necessary to ensure the service can be provided in a safe manner. (1973, c. 208, s. 8; c. 1121; 1995, c. 94, s. 35; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2001-220, s. 1.)

§ 143-515. Establishment of regions.

The Secretary may establish an appropriate number of multicounty emergency medical services regions. (1973, c. 208, s. 9; 2001-220, s. 1.)

§ 143-516. Single State agency.

The Department of Health and Human Services is hereby designated as the single agency for North Carolina for the purposes of all federal emergency medical services legislation as has or may be hereafter enacted to assist in development of emergency medical services plans and programs. (1973, c. 208, s. 10; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a).)

§ 143-517. Ambulance support; free enterprise.

Each county shall ensure that emergency medical services are provided to its citizens. Nothing in this Article affects the power of local governments to finance ambulance operations or to support rescue squads. Nothing in this Article shall be construed to allow infringement on the private practice of medicine or the lawful operation of health care facilities. (1973, c. 208, s. 11; 2001-220, s. 1.)

§ 143-518. Confidentiality of patient information.

(a) Medical records compiled and maintained by the Department, hospitals participating in the statewide trauma system, or EMS providers in connection with dispatch, response, treatment, or transport of individual patients or in connection with the statewide trauma system pursuant to Article 7 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes may contain patient identifiable data which will allow linkage to other health care-based data systems for the purposes of quality management, peer review, and public health initiatives.

These medical records and data shall be strictly confidential and shall not be considered public records within the meaning of G.S. 132-1 and shall not be released or made public except under any of the following conditions:

- (1) Release is made of specific medical or epidemiological information for statistical purposes in a way that no person can be identified.
- (2) Release is made of all or part of the medical record with the written consent of the person or persons identified or their guardians.
- (3) Release is made to health care personnel providing medical care to the patient.
- (4) Release is made pursuant to a court order. Upon request of the person identified in the record, the record shall be reviewed in camera. In the trial, the trial judge may, during the taking of testimony concerning such information, exclude from the courtroom all persons except the officers of the court, the parties, and those engaged in the trial of the case.
- (5) Release is made to a Medical Review Committee as defined in G.S. 131E-95, 90-21.22A, or 130A-45.7 or to a peer review committee as defined in G.S. 131E-108, 131E-155, 131E-162, 122C-30, or 131D-21.1.
- (6) Release is made for use in a health research project under rules adopted by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission. The Commission shall adopt rules that allow release of information when an institutional review board, as defined by the Commission, has determined that the health research project:
 - a. Is of sufficient scientific importance to outweigh the intrusion into the privacy of the patient that would result from the disclosure;
 - b. Is impracticable without the use or disclosure of identifying health information;
 - c. Contains safeguards to protect the information from redisclosure;
 - d. Contains safeguards against identifying, directly or indirectly, any patient in any report of the research project; and
 - e. Contains procedures to remove or destroy at the earliest opportunity, consistent with the purposes of the project, information that would enable the patient to be identified, unless

an institutional review board authorizes retention of identifying information for purposes of another research project.

(7) Release is made to a statewide data processor, as defined in Article 11A of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, in which case the data is deemed to have been submitted as if it were required to have been submitted under that Article.

(8) Release is made pursuant to any other law.

(b) Charges, accounts, credit histories, and other personal financial records compiled and maintained by the Department or EMS providers in connection with the admission, treatment, and discharge of individual patients are strictly confidential and shall not be released. (2001-220, s. 1; 2002-179, s. 11; 2003-392, ss. 2(g), 2(h).)

§ 143-519. Emergency Medical Services Disciplinary Committee.

(a) There is created an Emergency Medical Services Disciplinary Committee which shall review and make recommendations to the Department regarding all disciplinary matters relating to credentialing of emergency medical services personnel.

(b) The Emergency Medical Services Disciplinary Committee shall consist of seven members appointed by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to serve four-year terms. Two of the members shall be currently practicing local EMS physician medical directors. One member each shall be a current physician member of the North Carolina Medical Board, a current EMS administrator, a current EMS educator, and two currently practicing and credentialed EMS personnel, one of whom shall be an emergency medical technician-paramedic.

(c) In order to stagger the terms of the membership of the Committee, the initial appointment for one of the local EMS physician medical directors and the currently practicing and credentialed emergency medical technician-paramedic shall be for a three-year term. The other three initial appointments and all future appointments shall be for four-year terms.

(d) Any appointment to fill a vacancy on the Committee created by a resignation, dismissal, death, or disability of a member shall be for the balance of the unexpired term.

(e) A majority of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Facilities Services, Office of Emergency Medical Services, shall supply all clerical and other services required by the Committee.

(f) The Committee shall elect annually from its membership a chairperson and vice-chairperson upon a majority vote of the quorum present. (2001-220, s. 1; 2003-392, s. 2(i).)

§ 143-520. Reserved for future codification purposes.