

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 2015

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SENATE BILL 437

Short Title: Appropriate Funds for Poison Control. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Tucker (Primary Sponsor); Hartsell, Hise, Pate, and Sanderson.

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate.

March 26, 2015

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, TO PROVIDE STATEWIDE POISON CONTROL SERVICES THROUGH THE CAROLINAS POISON CENTER.

Whereas, deaths from drug overdose have been steadily rising over the past decade and have become the leading cause of injury deaths in the United States; and

Whereas, the Carolinas Poison Center (the Center) has provided high-quality, cost-efficient services to the citizens of North Carolina since 1996 by serving as the State's poison control center providing a first line of detection for poisonings involving pharmaceuticals, food, and agriculture products, as well as gases and other toxins; and

Whereas, the Center provides a level of security in its tracking and monitoring of reported poisonings that are shared with both federal and State agencies in a real-time environment; and

Whereas, in late 2014, the Center was able to establish a help line for citizens to address questions about Ebola within three hours of receiving this request from the Executive Branch; and

Whereas, the Center took more than 500 calls from the public in two different languages related to information about potential exposure to Ebola; and

Whereas, the Center has managed nearly 490,000 patients in a low-cost setting over the past five years from every county in North Carolina; and

Whereas, three out of every four calls are managed at the caller site at no cost to the patient or to a government or private insurer; and

Whereas, the Center saves the State nearly \$8,000,000 annually by averting unnecessary calls to 911 and unnecessary visits to urgent care centers, emergency rooms, and physician offices; and

Whereas, the Center receives approximately \$530,000 per year in federal funds that are in jeopardy and subject to maintenance of effort requirements imposed on the State; and

Whereas, administering a State poison control center is a responsibility and function of state government; and

Whereas, the Center's existence as North Carolina's poison control center, Ebola resource center, and a critical public safety surveillance tool at the State's disposal is in jeopardy without adequate State funding; and

Whereas, the amount of funding necessary to meet the State's obligation is short by \$1,500,000; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:



1 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
2 Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of one million five hundred
3 thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and the sum of one million five
4 hundred thousand dollars (\$1,500,000) for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. These funds shall be used
5 to increase the State contract with the Carolinas Poison Center, the designated poison center for
6 North Carolina operated by Carolinas Medical Center.

7 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2015.