

§ 122C-192. Review and protection of information.

(a) Notwithstanding G.S. 8-53, G.S. 8-53.3, or any other law relating to confidentiality of communications involving a patient or client, as needed to ensure quality assurance activities, the Secretary may review any writing or other record concerning the admission, discharge, medication, treatment, medical condition, or history of a client of an area authority or State facility. The Secretary may also review the personnel records of employees of an area authority or State facility.

(b) An area authority, State facility, its employees, and any other individual interviewed in the course of an inspection are immune from liability for damages resulting from disclosure of any information to the Secretary.

Except as required by law, it is unlawful for the Secretary or his representative to disclose:

- (1) Any confidential or privileged information obtained under this section unless the client or his legally responsible person authorizes disclosure in writing; or
- (2) The name of anyone who has furnished information concerning an area authority or State facility without that individual's consent.

Violation of this subsection is a Class 3 misdemeanor punishable only by a fine, not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

(c) The Secretary shall adopt rules to ensure that unauthorized disclosure does not occur.

(d) All confidential or privileged information obtained under this section and the names of individuals providing such information are not public records under Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. (1985, c. 589, s. 2; 1993, c. 539, s. 926; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)