

For Immediate Release



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Date 2025-04-28 12:07



From the Office of Sen. Joyce Waddell, NC Senate
Mecklenburg County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 28, 2025
Chapter VI
Volume 17

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Greetings:

The General Assembly was on spring break last week. Session will resume on Monday, April 28th. The General Assembly will be entering into crossover which is the time when many bills that have been heard in its perspective chamber will cross over into the other chamber to be heard.

Only those bills that have been heard in both chambers can have the ability to become law.

Before leaving for spring break the Senate passed SB 177 and SB 527.

Joyce Waddell



**Democratic
County
Convention**

Senator Waddell brings greetings and Legislative information to the Mecklenburg Democratic County Convention.

SB 177 - Add Psychiatric Hospitals to Medicaid HASP.

SB 177 would allow freestanding psychiatric hospitals to participate in North Carolina's Healthcare Access and Stabilization Program (HASP), which currently provides increased Medicaid reimbursements only to acute care hospitals.

The bill defines freestanding psychiatric hospitals as licensed facilities primarily offering inpatient psychiatric services, excluding State-owned hospitals. To qualify for HASP, these facilities must report Medicare cost data. SB 177 also amends existing hospital assessment laws to add specific assessments for freestanding psychiatric hospitals, ensuring they contribute to both traditional Medicaid and Medicaid expansion reimbursements.

I believe this bill can strengthen the financial stability of psychiatric facilities, ensure more timely care for individuals with mental health needs, and support the overall goal of improving behavioral health infrastructure across North Carolina.

SB 527 - Modify Laws Applicable to LME/MCOs.

SB 527 would exempt most Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO) employees, except for senior management, from the State Human Resources Act's compensation-related provisions. It defines senior management as key leadership positions like CEO, CFO, and COO.

The bill removes the current requirement that counties approve salary plans for LME/MCO employees when salaries exceed the highest county salary plan within their catchment area, streamlining salary approval to only require oversight by the Office of State Human Resources (OSHR). These changes would take effect starting July 1, 2025.

Additionally, the bill would allow, but not require, LME/MCOs operating Medicaid Tailored Plans to contract with prepaid health plans offering standard benefit plans. This provides LME/MCOs with greater flexibility in managing partnerships for service delivery. Overall, the bill aims to give LME/MCOs more autonomy over employee management and operations while maintaining state oversight for senior leadership roles.

This bill's intent to strengthen the ability of LME/MCOs to operate more efficiently by giving them greater flexibility to manage staff compensation and partnerships, while maintaining appropriate oversight for senior leadership. By reducing unnecessary administrative barriers, this bill supports faster hiring, better retention, and more responsive service delivery to North Carolinians needing behavioral health and intellectual/developmental disability services.

NC General Assembly

Visit www.ncleg.gov, the official website of the North Carolina General Assembly. Use this website as a tool to track bills, find and communicate with your state representatives, as well as follow chamber activity, meetings and issues before the General Assembly.

You can view bills in full by visiting www.ncleg.gov.

Please don't forget to consider getting vaccinated. There are viruses and other illnesses plaguing our community that can be prevented by vaccines and proper handwashing.



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