

S.C. CODE ANN. § 44-7-2410 et seq. (2011).

**Article 20 – Hospital Infections Disclosure Act:
Selected from Title 44, Chapter 7 for posting on the DHEC Hospital
Infections Disclosure Act Web site.**

For entire Title 44 – Health, see <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t44c007.htm>

**South Carolina Code of Laws
(Unannotated)
Current through the end of the 2010 Session**

Title 44 - Health

CHAPTER 7.

HOSPITALS, TUBERCULOSIS CAMPS AND HEALTH SERVICES DISTRICTS

ARTICLE 20.

HOSPITAL INFECTIONS DISCLOSURE

SECTION 44-7-2410. Citation of article.

This article may be cited as the "Hospital Infections Disclosure Act".

SECTION 44-7-2420. Definitions.

As used in this article:

(1) "Department" means the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

(2) "Hospital" means a facility organized and administered to provide overnight medical or surgical care or nursing care of illness, injury, or infirmity and may provide obstetrical care, and in which all diagnoses, treatment, or care is administered by or under the direction of persons currently licensed to practice medicine, surgery, or osteopathy and is licensed by the department as a hospital.

"Hospital" may include residential treatment facilities for children and adolescents in need of mental health treatment which are physically a part of a licensed psychiatric hospital. This definition does not include facilities that are licensed by the Department of Social Services.

(3) "Hospital acquired infection" means a localized or systemic condition that:

(a) results from adverse reaction to the presence of an infectious agent or agents or its toxin or toxins; and

(b) was not present or incubating at the time of admission to the hospital.

SECTION 44-7-2430. Collection of data; reporting by individual hospitals; appointment of advisory committee; adoption of methodology for collecting and analyzing data.

(A)(1) Individual hospitals shall collect data on hospital acquired infection rates for the specific clinical procedures as recommended by the advisory committee and defined by the department, including the following categories:

- (a) surgical site infections;
- (b) ventilator associated pneumonia;
- (c) central line related bloodstream infections; and
- (d) other categories as provided under subsection (D).

(2) Hospitals also shall report completeness of certain selected infection control processes, as recommended by the advisory committee and defined by the department, according to accepted standard definitions.

(B)(1) Hospitals shall submit reports at least every six months on their hospital acquired infection rates to the department. Reports must be submitted in a format and at a time as provided for by the department. Data in these reports must cover a period ending not earlier than one month prior to submission of the report. These reports must be made available to the public at each hospital and through the department. The first report must be submitted before February 1, 2008. Subsequent reports must be submitted at least every six months on dates determined by the department. When compiling its reports, the department may combine data from multiple reporting periods in order to better demonstrate hospital acquired infection rates.

(2) If the hospital is a division or subsidiary of another entity that owns or operates other hospitals, or related facilities, the report must be for the specific division or subsidiary and not for the other entity.

(C)(1) The Board of Health and Environmental Control shall appoint an advisory committee that must have an equal number of members representing all involved parties. The board shall seek recommendations for appointments to the advisory committee from organizations that represent the interests of hospitals, consumers, businesses, purchasers of health care services, physicians, and other professionals involved in the research and control of infections.

(2) The advisory committee shall assist the department in the development of all aspects of the department's methodology for collecting, analyzing, and disclosing the information collected under this article, including collection methods, formatting, and methods and means for release and dissemination of this information.

(3) In developing the methodology for collecting and analyzing the infection rate data, the department and advisory committee shall consider existing methodologies and systems for data collection, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Healthcare Safety Network; however, the department's discretion to adopt a methodology is not limited or restricted to any existing methodology or system. The data collection and analysis methodology must be disclosed to the public prior to any public disclosure of hospital acquired infection rates.

(4) The department and the advisory committee shall evaluate on a regular basis the quality and accuracy of hospital information reported under this article and the data collection, analysis, and dissemination methodologies.

(D) The department may, after consultation with the advisory committee, require hospitals to collect data on hospital acquired infection rates in categories additional to those set forth in subsection (A).

SECTION 44-7-2440. Annual reports and quarterly bulletins; contents; publicizing of reports.

(A) The department annually shall submit to the General Assembly a report summarizing the hospital reports submitted pursuant to Section 44-7-2430 and shall publish the annual report on its website. The first annual report must be submitted and published before February 1, 2009. Subsequent annual reports to the General Assembly must be submitted before April sixteenth of each year. The department may issue quarterly informational bulletins summarizing all or part of the information submitted in the hospital reports.

(B) All reports issued by the department must be risk adjusted.

(C) The annual report must compare the risk adjusted hospital acquired infection rates, collected under Section 44-7-2430, for each individual hospital in the State. The department, in consultation with the advisory committee, shall make this comparison as easy to comprehend as possible. The report also must include an executive summary, written in plain language, that must include, but is not limited to, a discussion of findings, conclusions, and trends concerning the overall state of hospital acquired infections in the State, including a comparison to prior years. The report may include policy recommendations, as appropriate.

(D) The department shall publicize the report and its availability as widely as practical to interested parties including, but not limited to, hospitals, health care providers, media organizations, health insurers, health maintenance organizations, purchasers of health insurance, consumer or patient advocacy groups, and individual consumers. The annual report must be made available to any person upon request and the department may charge a fee for such copies, not to exceed the actual cost of the copy of the report.

(E) No hospital report or department disclosure may contain information identifying a patient, employee, or licensed health care professional in connection with a specific infection incident.

(F) The department, after consultation with the advisory committee, may phase-in the reporting requirements of this section.

SECTION 44-7-2450. Protection of patient confidentiality; reporting accidents or incidents.

(A) It is the intent of the General Assembly that a patient's right of privilege or confidentiality must not be violated in any manner. Patient social security numbers and any other information that could be used to identify an individual patient must not be released notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary.

(B) Nothing in this section affects the duty of a facility or activity licensed by the Department of Health and Environmental Control to report accidents or incidents pursuant to the department's regulations. However, anything reported pursuant to the department's regulations must not be considered to waive any privilege or confidentiality provided in subsection (A).

SECTION 44-7-2460. Ensuring compliance with article and regulations; civil monetary penalties; promulgation of regulations.

(A) The department shall ensure and enforce compliance with this article and regulations promulgated pursuant to this article by the imposition of civil monetary penalties and as a condition of licensure or permitting under this chapter pursuant to Section 44-7-320.

(B) The department may promulgate regulations as necessary to carry out its responsibilities under this article.