

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025**

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SENATE BILL 323

Short Title: Student Health and Responsibility Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Applewhite and Robinson (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 19, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO ESTABLISH THE SAFER SEX SUPPLIES
GRANT PROGRAM.

Whereas, North Carolina experiences significant costs related to treating sexually transmitted infections (STIs), which impact the public health system and the economy of the State; and

Whereas, investing in preventive health measures is proven to reduce taxpayer burdens by lowering emergency medical costs and Medicaid expenses and by avoiding lost productivity due to illness; and

Whereas, ensuring students remain in school and complete their education contributes to North Carolina's workforce development, economic growth, and global competitiveness; and

Whereas, businesses benefit from a healthier, more-educated workforce, and economic studies indicate that states with strong public health initiatives see increased workforce participation; and

Whereas, programs that promote personal responsibility and preventive care align with fiscally responsible governance by mitigating future public health care expenditures; and

Whereas, empowering students with the knowledge and resources to make informed health decisions ensures their ability to protect their futures and pursue academic and professional success without unnecessary health-related setbacks; and

Whereas, targeted data collection and analysis will ensure that (i) rural, suburban, and urban communities receive equitable access to resources and (ii) program implementation is based on effectiveness and efficiency; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

PART I. TITLE

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Student Health and Responsibility Act."

PART II. SAFER SEX SUPPLIES GRANT PROGRAM

SECTION 2.(a) Definitions. – The following definitions shall apply in this section:

(1) Applicable administering entity. – As follows:

- a. For constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina.
- b. For community colleges, the State Board of Community Colleges.
- c. For public school units, the Department of Public Instruction.



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- (2) Eligible entity. – Constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, community colleges, and public school units.
- (3) Safer sex supplies. – Supplies that help promote safe sexual encounters, including condoms and lubricants.

SECTION 2.(b) Program Established. – There is established the Safer Sex Supplies Grant Program (Program) for the 2025-2026, 2026-2027, and 2027-2028 fiscal years. The Program shall expire June 30, 2028. The Program shall be administered separately by the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina for constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, the State Board of Community Colleges for community colleges, and the Department of Public Instruction for high schools in public school units. The purpose of the Program is to reduce health care costs and support student success by assisting eligible entities that are grant recipients to provide free access for students to safer sex supplies at constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, community colleges, and high schools located in public school units.

SECTION 2.(c) Grant Applications. – An eligible entity may submit an application to the applicable administering entity for a grant pursuant to this section for each year the Program is in effect. The application shall identify at least the following:

- (1) Current and ongoing needs for safer sex supplies and estimated costs associated with those needs.
- (2) A plan to do at least the following:
 - a. Offer free safer sex supplies in designated locations on campus, including student health centers, residence halls, guidance counselor offices, and offices of athletic coaches.
 - b. Replenish supplies as needed based on student usage.
 - c. Maintain student privacy and dignity to foster responsible decision making and self-sufficiency.
 - d. Partner with campus organizations, student health groups, community organizations, health care providers, local health departments, nonprofit organizations, and private sector entities to facilitate distribution and awareness campaigns for the Program, including securing in-kind contributions of safer sex supplies.
 - e. Establish at each eligible entity receiving funds a Student Health Advisory Committee consisting of student body leaders, health professionals, and faculty advisors. The Committee would oversee implementation of the grant funds, assess student engagement, and recommend improvements.
 - f. Continue to provide safer sex supplies to students without grant funds after the expiration of the Program.

SECTION 2.(d) Administration of Grants; Award of Funds. – Each applicable administering entity shall develop appropriate criteria and guidelines for selecting grant recipients and administering the grants pursuant to this section, including at least the following:

- (1) Prioritizing the selection of grant recipients based on applications that demonstrate economic benefits, collaboration, and cost efficiency.
- (2) Allocating funds to an eligible entity that receives an award on the basis of enrollment.

SECTION 2.(e) Use of Funds. – Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, including G.S. 115C-81.30(e), eligible entities receiving grant funds pursuant to this section shall do the following:

- (1) Provide free safer sex supplies to students in accordance with the application submitted by the eligible entity pursuant to subsection (c) of this section.

- (2) Refrain from requiring parental permission for students to access safer sex supplies, including for students enrolled in high school in a public school unit.

SECTION 2.(f) Collaboration. – Each applicable administering entity shall collaborate with the other applicable administering entities and eligible entities receiving grant funds, to the extent possible, to share best practices and coordinate outreach efforts.

SECTION 2.(g) Supplement Not Supplant. – Grants provided pursuant to the Program shall be used to supplement and not to supplant State or non-State funds already provided for safer sex supplies.

SECTION 2.(h) Administrative Costs. – Of the funds appropriated to each applicable administering entity by this act for the grants provided in this section, the applicable administering entity may retain a total of up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) in each fiscal year for administrative costs associated with the Program.

SECTION 2.(i) Program Report. – No later than April 1 of each fiscal year in which funds are awarded pursuant to this section, each applicable administering entity shall report on the Program to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services. The report shall include at least the following information:

- (1) The identity of each eligible entity that received grant funds through the Program.
- (2) The amount of funding received by each entity identified pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection.
- (3) The safer sex supplies purchased with grant funds by each entity that received a grant and rates of student usage of those supplies.
- (4) The overall impact of the Program, including at least the following information:
 - a. Projected health care savings rates.
 - b. Regional effectiveness of the Program.
- (5) Recommendations to expand or modify the Program, taking into account cost-effectiveness and the impact of the Program on public health.

PART III. APPROPRIATIONS

SECTION 3.(a) There is appropriated from the General Fund the sum of nine million six hundred thousand dollars (\$9,600,000) in nonrecurring funds for each year of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium to provide grants to public high schools and public institutions of higher education in accordance with the Safer Sex Supplies Grant Program established pursuant to Section 2 of this act and to be allocated in each fiscal year of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium as follows:

- (1) Three million seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$3,750,000) to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina.
- (2) Three million dollars (\$3,000,000) to the Community Colleges System Office.
- (3) Two million eight hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$2,850,000) to the Department of Public Instruction.

SECTION 3.(b) There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, the sum of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2025-2026 fiscal year and the sum of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) in nonrecurring funds for the 2026-2027 fiscal year to do all of the following in relation to the Safer Sex Supplies Grant Program (Program) authorized by Section 2 of this act:

- (1) Coordinate with applicable administering entities and eligible entities receiving grant funds under the Program to ensure consistent messaging,

1 foster public awareness, and promote informed and responsible decision
2 making by students.

3 (2) Provide technical assistance, data monitoring, and other related support to
4 eligible entities receiving funds under the Program and to local health
5 departments that collaborate with eligible entities.

6 (3) Collaborate with local health departments and student groups to provide
7 guidance on the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, the benefits of
8 preventive care, and related workforce impact analysis.

9 **SECTION 3.(c)** The funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall not revert at
10 the end of each fiscal year of the 2025-2027 fiscal biennium but shall instead remain available
11 until June 30, 2028.

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13 **PART IV. EFFECTIVE DATE**

14 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2025.