

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2025

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HOUSE BILL 681
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/29/25
Third Edition Engrossed 5/7/25

Short Title: Update Opioid Abatement Treatment Prog. Rules.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 3, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT DIRECTING THE COMMISSION FOR MENTAL HEALTH, DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES, AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES TO AMEND THE RULES
REGARDING OUTPATIENT OPIOID TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR GREATER
CONSISTENCY WITH FEDERAL REGULATIONS.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1.(a) The Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities,
and Substance Use Services (Commission) shall amend the rules applicable to outpatient opioid
treatment programs (OTPs) in 10A NCAC 27G .3600 through 10A NCAC 27G .3605, to be more
consistent with 42 C.F.R. Part 8 governing medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder.
In amending these rules, the Commission shall make at least all of the following changes:

- (1) Remove stability of a patient's home environment and social relationships as
an eligibility criterion for take-home medication.
- (2) Require the State Opioid Treatment Authority (SOTA) to review patient
discharge policies related to continued substance use, missed doses, and
nonparticipation in ancillary services such as counseling.
- (3) Remove structured counseling schedules to better align with federal
regulations that promote individualized care that is more patient-centered and
flexible.
- (4) Reduce the number of required drug tests to align with the frequency required
by federal regulations.
- (5) Explicitly permit OTPs to administer methadone to patients who are not
enrolled with the OTPs as their patients but can be verified as a patient in
another OTP through contacting the patient's home OTP, checking the central
registry, or other means established by the Commission.

SECTION 1.(b) In determining whether to include any additional changes to the
rules applicable to OTPs to achieve greater consistency with 42 C.F.R. Part 8, the Commission
shall engage with current and former OTP clients and OTP providers for input on other changes
that would serve the goal of improving access to patient-centered care and achieving better
alignment with federal regulations. However, the Commission shall not amend the rules to
include any input that is inconsistent with State or federal law.

SECTION 1.(c) The Commission shall publish the proposed text of the amended
rules applicable to OTPs by January 1, 2026.

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law.

