
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 641 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY CIRESI, SANCHEZ, MADDEN, HILL-EVANS, KINKEAD,
ROZZI, KEEFER, N. NELSON, CERRATO, D. WILLIAMS AND KINSEY,
MARCH 21, 2023

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, MARCH 21, 2023

AN ACT

1 Providing for the protection of patients and medical personnel
2 from health care facility retaliation, for prohibitions, for
3 rebuttable presumptions, for discriminatory treatment, for
4 evidence, for civil penalties and remedies, for criminal
5 penalty, for restitution and damages, for injunctive relief,
6 for peer review activity and for exemption.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Short title.

10 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Protection of
11 Patients and Medical Personnel from Health Care Facility
12 Retaliation Act.

13 Section 2. Definitions.

14 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
15 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
16 context clearly indicates otherwise:

17 "County correctional institution." As defined in 61 Pa.C.S.
18 § 102 (relating to definitions).

19 "Health care facility." As defined in section 802.1 of the

1 act of July 19, 1979 (P.L.130, No.48), known as the Health Care
2 Facilities Act. The term includes the facility's administrative
3 personnel, employees, boards and committees of the board and
4 medical staff.

5 "Medical personnel." An employee, member of the medical
6 staff or another health care worker of a health care facility.

7 "State correctional institution." As defined in 61 Pa.C.S. §
8 102.

9 Section 3. Prohibitions.

10 (a) Health care facilities.--A health care facility may not
11 discriminate or retaliate against a patient or medical personnel
12 because the patient or medical personnel has done either of the
13 following:

14 (1) Presented a grievance, complaint or report to the
15 facility, to an entity or agency responsible for accrediting
16 or evaluating the facility, to the medical staff of the
17 facility or to another governmental entity.

18 (2) Initiated, participated or cooperated in an
19 investigation or administrative proceeding related to the
20 quality of care, services or conditions at the facility that
21 is carried out by an entity or agency responsible for
22 accrediting or evaluating the facility or its medical staff
23 or governmental entity.

24 (b) Entities.--An entity that owns or operates a health care
25 facility or another health care facility may not discriminate or
26 retaliate against a person because the person took action under
27 this act.

28 Section 4. Rebuttable presumption relating to patients.

29 Any type of discriminatory treatment of a patient by whom, or
30 upon whose behalf, a grievance or complaint has been submitted

1 to a governmental entity or received by a health care facility
2 administrator within 180 days of the filing of the grievance or
3 complaint shall raise a rebuttable presumption that the action
4 was taken by the health care facility in retaliation for the
5 filing of the grievance or complaint.

6 Section 5. Rebuttable presumption relating to medical
7 personnel.

8 There shall be a rebuttable presumption that discriminatory
9 action was taken by the health care facility, or by the entity
10 that owns or operates that health care facility, or that owns or
11 operates any other health care facility, in retaliation against
12 medical personnel if responsible staff at the facility or the
13 entity that owns or operates the facility:

14 (1) Had knowledge of the actions.

15 (2) Participated or cooperated with the medical
16 personnel responsible for acts described in section 3.

17 (3) Commits a discriminatory act within 120 days of the
18 filing of the grievance or complaint by the medical
19 personnel.

20 Section 6. Discriminatory treatment.

21 For purposes of this act, discriminatory treatment of medical
22 personnel includes discharge, demotion, suspension or any
23 unfavorable changes in, or breach of, the terms or conditions of
24 a contract, employment or privileges of the medical personnel or
25 the threat of any of the actions.

26 Section 7. Evidence.

27 The presumptions in sections 4 and 5 shall be presumptions
28 affecting the burden of producing evidence as provided in 42
29 Pa.C.S. Ch. 61 (relating to rules of evidence).

30 Section 8. Civil penalties and remedies.

1 (a) Secretary of Health.--Upon a determination by hearing
2 that this act was violated, the Secretary of Health may pursue
3 one or more of the following courses of action:

4 (1) Issue an order requiring the person in violation to
5 cease and desist from engaging in the violation.

6 (2) Suspend or revoke or refuse to issue or renew the
7 certificate or license of the person in violation.

8 (3) Impose a civil penalty of not more than \$25,000 for
9 each violation.

10 (4) Impose another appropriate remedy.

11 (b) Other remedies.--The enforcement remedies imposed under
12 this section are in addition to other remedies or penalties that
13 may be imposed by this act or any other law.

14 Section 9. Criminal penalty.

15 In addition to another penalty assessed under this act or any
16 other law, a person who willfully violates this section commits
17 a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of not more than \$20,000.

18 Section 10. Restitution and damages.

19 (a) Employee.--An employee who has been discriminated
20 against in employment under this act shall be entitled to:

21 (1) reinstatement, reimbursement for lost wages and work
22 benefits caused by the acts of the employer and the legal
23 costs associated with pursuing the case; or

24 (2) a remedy deemed warranted by a court of competent
25 jurisdiction.

26 (b) Health care worker.--A health care worker who has been
27 discriminated against under this act shall be entitled to:

28 (1) reimbursement for lost income and the legal costs
29 associated with pursuing the case; or

30 (2) a remedy deemed warranted by a court of competent

1 jurisdiction.

2 (c) Medical staff.--A member of a medical staff who has been
3 discriminated against under this act shall be entitled to
4 reinstatement, reimbursement for lost income resulting from a
5 change in the terms or conditions of the privileges caused by
6 the acts of the health care facility or the entity that owns or
7 operates a health care facility or another health care facility
8 that is owned or operated by that entity, and the legal costs
9 associated with pursuing the case, or to a remedy deemed
10 warranted by a court of competent jurisdiction.

11 Section 11. Injunctive relief relating to peer review.

12 (a) Right to petition.--The medical staff of a health care
13 facility may petition a court for an injunction to protect a
14 peer review committee from being required to comply with
15 evidentiary demands on a pending peer review hearing from the
16 member of the medical staff who has filed an action under this
17 section, if the evidentiary demands from the complainant would
18 impede the peer review process or endanger the health and safety
19 of patients of the health care facility during the peer review
20 process.

21 (b) In camera review.--Prior to granting an injunction, the
22 court shall conduct an in camera review of the evidence sought
23 to be discovered to determine if a peer review hearing, as
24 authorized by law, would be impeded. If it is determined that
25 the peer review hearing will be impeded, the injunction shall be
26 granted until the peer review hearing is completed.

27 (c) Irreparable harm.--Nothing in this section shall be
28 construed to preclude the court, on motion of its own or by a
29 party, from issuing an injunction or other order under this act
30 in the interest of justice for the duration of the peer review

1 process to protect the person from irreparable harm.

2 Section 12. Peer review activity.

3 This act may not be construed to limit the ability of the
4 medical staff to carry out its legitimate peer review activities
5 in accordance with 35 Pa.C.S. Ch. 81 (relating to emergency
6 medical services system) or any other law.

7 Section 13. Exemption.

8 This act does not apply to an inmate of a State correctional
9 institution or juvenile facility owned or operated by the State
10 or local government or to an inmate housed in a local detention
11 facility, including a county correctional institution or a
12 juvenile hall, juvenile camp or other juvenile detention
13 facility.

14 Section 14. Effective date.

15 This act shall take effect in 60 days.