

**Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly, State of North Dakota, begun in the Capitol in the City of Bismarck, on Monday, the sixth day of January, one thousand nine hundred and ninety-seven**

SENATE BILL NO. 2059  
(Senators Nalewaja, Robinson, W. Stenehjem)  
(Representatives Brown, Grande)

AN ACT to amend and reenact section 25-03.1-43 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to making confidential commitment records of the department of human services available to law enforcement in limited circumstances.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 25-03.1-43 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**25-03.1-43. Confidential records.** All information and records obtained in the course of an investigation, evaluation, examination, or treatment under this chapter and the presence or past presence of a patient in a treatment facility must be kept confidential and not as public records, except as the requirements of a hearing under this chapter may necessitate a different procedure. All information and records are available to the court and, under regulations established by the department, may be disclosed only to:

1. Physicians and providers of health, mental health, or social and welfare services involved in caring for, treating, or rehabilitating the patient to whom the patient has given written consent to have information disclosed.
2. Individuals to whom the patient has given written consent to have information disclosed.
3. Persons legally representing the patient, including attorneys representing the patient in commitment proceedings, upon proper proof of representation.
4. Persons authorized by a court order.
5. Persons doing research or maintaining health statistics, if the anonymity of the patient is assured and the facility recognizes the project as a bona fide research or statistical undertaking.
6. The department of corrections and rehabilitation in cases in which prisoners sentenced to the state prison are patients in the state hospital on authorized transfers either by voluntary admissions or by court order.
7. Governmental or law enforcement agencies when necessary to secure the return of a patient who is absent without authorization from the facility where the patient was undergoing evaluation or treatment, or when necessary to report a crime committed on facility premises or against facility staff or patients, or threats to commit such a crime. The disclosures must be directly related to a patient's commission of a crime or threats to commit such a crime and are limited to the circumstances of the incident, the name and address of the patient involved, and the patient's last known whereabouts.
8. Qualified service organizations and third-party payers to the extent necessary to perform their functions.
9. Victims and witnesses of a crime to the extent necessary to comply with the notification requirements of subsection 16 of section 12.1-34-02.

10. Law enforcement agencies to confirm and investigate the address of a person required to register under section 12.1-32-15.

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President of the Senate

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Speaker of the House

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Secretary of the Senate

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Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Fifty-fifth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2059.

Senate Vote:      Yeas    47            Nays    0            Absent    2

House Vote:      Yeas    94            Nays    0            Absent    3

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Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

Approved at \_\_\_\_\_ M. on \_\_\_\_\_, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

Filed in this office this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1997,

at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock \_\_\_\_\_ M.

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Secretary of State