

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1323**

Introduced by

Representatives Porter, D. Anderson, Hogan, Holman, J. Nelson

Senators Axness, Dever, Erbele, Larsen

1 A BILL for an Act to amend and reenact sections 23-43-01, 23-43-02, 23-43-03, 23-43-04,  
2 23-43-05, and 23-43-06 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the creation and  
3 implementation of a stroke system; and to provide for a report to the legislative management.

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

5 **SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 23-43-01 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
6 amended and reenacted as follows:

7 **23-43-01. Primary stroke centers. Stroke system - Duties of state health officer.**

- 8 1. ~~Effective January 1, 2010, the state department of health shall designate qualified~~  
9 ~~hospitals as primary stroke centers. A hospital seeking designation as a primary stroke~~  
10 ~~center shall apply to the department for that designation and shall demonstrate to the~~  
11 ~~department that the hospital meets the applicable criteria established by the~~  
12 ~~department.~~
- 13 2. ~~The criteria established by the department for designation as a primary stroke center~~  
14 ~~must include a requirement that the hospital be certified as a primary stroke center by~~  
15 ~~the joint commission on accreditation of health care organizations or by a similar~~  
16 ~~accrediting or certifying organization possessing hospital standards recognized~~  
17 ~~nationally by the health care industry and accepted by the department.~~
- 18 3. ~~The department may suspend or revoke a hospital's designation as a primary stroke~~  
19 ~~center, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, if the department determines the~~  
20 ~~hospital is not in compliance with the requirements of this chapter.~~
- 21 4. ~~Annually, the state department of health shall provide a list of hospitals designated as~~  
22 ~~primary stroke centers to each emergency medical services operation licensed in this~~  
23 ~~state. The department shall post to the department's website a list of the hospitals~~  
24 ~~designated as primary stroke centers.~~

1       The state health officer shall establish and maintain a comprehensive stroke system for the  
2 state. The program must comply with this chapter; be based on department-approved,  
3 nationally recognized guidelines and protocols; and provide specific patient care and support  
4 services criteria stroke centers shall meet to ensure stroke patients receive safe and effective  
5 care, and must modify the state's emergency medical response system to assure stroke  
6 patients are quickly identified and transported to and treated in facilities that have specialized  
7 programs for providing timely and effective treatment for stroke patients. The stroke system  
8 must include standards for the following components:

9       1. A system plan.

10      2. Prehospital emergency medical services.

11      3. Hospitals, for which the standards must include:

12          a. Standards for designation, redesignation, and removal of designation.

13          b. Standards for evaluation and quality improvement programs for designated  
14 facilities. The standards must require each facility to collect quality improvement  
15 data and to provide specified portions to the department for use in state and  
16 regional stroke quality improvement programs.

17      4. A stroke registry. Data in the stroke registry is not subject to subpoena or discovery or  
18 introduction into evidence in any civil action. A designated facility shall participate in  
19 the stroke registry. A hospital not designated shall provide to the stroke registry a  
20 minimum set of data elements for all stroke patients as determined by the stroke  
21 system of care advisory task force.

22      5. A stroke quality improvement program to monitor the performance of the stroke  
23 system. The proceedings and records of the stroke quality improvement program are  
24 not subject to subpoena or discovery or introduction into evidence in any civil action  
25 arising out of any matter that is the subject of consideration by the stroke quality  
26 improvement program.

27       **SECTION 2. AMENDMENT.** Section 23-43-02 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
28 amended and reenacted as follows:

1           **23-43-02. Stroke system of care task force-Designation of comprehensive stroke**  
2 **center, primary stroke centers, and acute stroke-ready hospitals.**

3           ~~1. The state department of health shall establish a stroke system of care task force. The~~  
4 ~~purpose of the task force is to encourage and ensure the establishment of an effective~~  
5 ~~stroke system of care throughout the state. The state health officer, or the officer's~~  
6 ~~designee, shall serve on the task force. The state health officer shall appoint members~~  
7 ~~to the task force who represent rural hospitals, physicians who treat patients in rural~~  
8 ~~areas, and members representing emergency medical services operations that~~  
9 ~~provide services in rural areas of the state. Members of the task force serve at the~~  
10 ~~pleasure of the state health officer.~~

11           ~~2. Before April 1, 2010, the stroke system of care task force shall provide the state~~  
12 ~~department of health with recommendations regarding the establishment of an~~  
13 ~~effective stroke system of care in the rural areas of this state. The initial~~  
14 ~~recommendations must include:~~

15           ~~a. Protocols for the triage, stabilization, and appropriate routing of stroke patients by~~  
16 ~~emergency medical services operations in rural areas; and~~

17           ~~b. A plan to provide for coordination and communication between rural hospitals,~~  
18 ~~primary stroke centers, and other support services in order to assure that~~  
19 ~~residents of all regions of the state have access to effective and efficient stroke~~  
20 ~~care.~~

21           ~~3. The state health council may adopt rules, based on the task force's recommendations.~~

22           ~~1. The state department of health shall identify hospitals that meet the criteria as a~~  
23 ~~comprehensive stroke center, primary stroke center, or acute stroke-ready hospital. In~~  
24 ~~order to receive a designation under this section, a hospital shall apply to the state~~  
25 ~~department of health and shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the department the~~  
26 ~~hospital meets the applicable criteria.~~

27           ~~2. In order to qualify for designation as a comprehensive stroke center, an accredited~~  
28 ~~acute care hospital must be certified as a comprehensive stroke center by a~~  
29 ~~department-approved, nationally recognized guidelines-based organization, which~~  
30 ~~provides comprehensive stroke center hospital certification for stroke care. As a~~

- 1           condition of retaining designation as a comprehensive stroke center, an acute care  
2           hospital shall maintain its certification.
- 3        3. In order to qualify for designation as a primary stroke center, an accredited acute care  
4           hospital must be certified as a primary stroke center by a department-approved,  
5           nationally recognized guidelines-based organization, which provides primary stroke  
6           center certification for stroke care. As a condition of retaining designation as a primary  
7           stroke center, an acute care hospital shall maintain its certification.
- 8        4. In order to qualify for designation as an acute stroke-ready hospital, an accredited  
9           acute care hospital must be certified as an acute stroke-ready hospital by ~~a~~  
10           department-approved, nationally recognized guidelines-based ~~organization, which~~  
11           ~~provides acute stroke-ready hospital certification for stroke care~~criteria. As a condition  
12           of retaining designation as an acute stroke-ready hospital, an acute care hospital shall  
13           maintain its certification.
- 14        5. Through agreement, a comprehensive stroke center and primary stroke center may  
15           coordinate with an acute stroke-ready hospital to provide appropriate access to care  
16           for acute stroke patients. The coordinating stroke care agreement must be in writing  
17           and include, at a minimum:
- 18           a. The transfer agreement for the transport and acceptance of a stroke patient seen  
19           by the acute stroke-ready hospital for stroke treatment therapies the stroke  
20           center or primary care center is not capable of providing; and
- 21           b. Communication criteria and protocol with the acute stroke-ready hospital.
- 22        6. If the department determines the hospital is not in compliance with the requirements  
23           set for designation level, after notice and a hearing, the state department of health  
24           may suspend or revoke a hospital's state designation as a comprehensive stroke  
25           center, primary stroke center, or acute stroke-ready hospital.
- 26        7. Any facility that is not designated, must have a predetermined plan for the triage of  
27           acute stroke patients. The plan must be filed annually with the state department of  
28           health, division of emergency medical services and trauma.

29        **SECTION 3. AMENDMENT.** Section 23-43-03 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
30        amended and reenacted as follows:

1       **23-43-03. Stroke triage – Emergency medical services operations - Assessment and**  
2 **transportation of stroke patients to a comprehensive stroke center, primary stroke**  
3 **center, or acute stroke-ready hospital.**

- 4       1. ~~Before January 1, 2011, the state department of health shall adopt a nationally-~~  
5 ~~recognized standardized stroke triage assessment tool. The department shall post this~~  
6 ~~standardized stroke triage assessment tool to the department's website and shall~~  
7 ~~provide a copy to each emergency medical services operation licensed in this state.~~  
8 ~~As a term of licensure under chapter 23-27, each licensed emergency medical~~  
9 ~~services operation shall adopt and implement a stroke triage assessment tool that is~~  
10 ~~substantially similar to the standardized stroke triage assessment tool adopted by the~~  
11 ~~department.~~
- 12       2. ~~The department shall work with the stroke task force to establish protocols related to~~  
13 ~~the assessment, treatment, and transport of stroke patients by emergency medical~~  
14 ~~services operations licensed by the state. The protocols may include regional transport~~  
15 ~~plans for the triage and transport of stroke patients to the closest, most appropriate~~  
16 ~~facility, including the bypass of health care facilities not designated as primary stroke~~  
17 ~~centers when it is safe to do so.~~
- 18       3. ~~Effective April 1, 2012, each emergency medical services operation licensed under~~  
19 ~~chapter 23-27 shall comply with this chapter.~~
- 20       1. Before June first of each year the state department of health shall send the list of  
21 comprehensive stroke centers, primary stroke centers, and acute stroke-ready  
22 hospitals to the medical director of each licensed emergency medical services  
23 operation in this state. The state department of health shall maintain a copy of the list  
24 and shall post a list of comprehensive stroke centers, primary stroke centers, and  
25 acute stroke-ready hospitals to the state department of health's website.
- 26       2. The state department of health shall adopt and distribute a nationally recognized,  
27 standardized stroke triage assessment tool. The department shall post this stroke  
28 triage assessment tool on the department's website and provide a copy of the  
29 assessment tool to each licensed emergency medical services operation. Each  
30 licensed emergency medical services operation shall use a stroke triage assessment

- 1            tool that is substantially similar to the sample stroke triage assessment tool provided  
2            by the state department of health.
- 3            3. Each emergency medical services operation in the state shall establish prehospital  
4            care protocols related to the assessment, treatment, and transport of a stroke patient  
5            by a licensed emergency medical services operation. Such protocols must include  
6            plans for the triage and transport of an acute stroke patient to the closest  
7            comprehensive or primary stroke center or when appropriate to an acute stroke-ready  
8            hospital, within a specified timeframe of onset of symptoms.
- 9            4. As part of current training requirements, each emergency medical services operation  
10           in the state shall establish protocols to assure licensed emergency medical services  
11           providers and 911 dispatch personnel receive regular training on the assessment and  
12           treatment of stroke patients.
- 13           5. An emergency medical services operation shall comply with this chapter.
- 14           6. All data reported under this chapter must be made available to the state department of  
15           health and to all other government agencies, or contractors of government agencies,  
16           which have responsibility for the management and administration of emergency  
17           medical services throughout the state.
- 18           7. This chapter may not be construed to require disclosure of any confidential information  
19           or other data in violation of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability  
20           Act of 1996 [Pub. L. 104-191; 110 Stat. 1936; 29 U.S.C. 1181 et seq.].

21            **SECTION 4. AMENDMENT.** Section 23-43-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
22 amended and reenacted as follows:

23            **23-43-04. Reports. Continuous improvement of quality of care for individuals with**  
24 **stroke - Recommendations - Report to legislative management.**

25            ~~Semiannually, each hospital designated as a primary stroke center shall provide the state-~~  
26 ~~department of health a report on the center's quality initiatives. The data in the report is an~~  
27 ~~exempt record and is not subject to the state's open records law. However, the department shall~~  
28 ~~make the data in these reports available to state and local government entities that have~~  
29 ~~responsibility for the management and administration of emergency medical services~~  
30 ~~throughout the state. Annually, the department shall compile the report data in aggregate form~~

1 as a report card and post this report card to the department's website. The results of this report  
2 card may be used by the department to conduct training.

3 1. The state department of health shall establish and implement a plan for achieving  
4 continuous quality improvement in the quality of care provided under the state  
5 comprehensive stroke system for stroke response and treatment. In implementing this  
6 plan, the state department of health shall:

7 a. Maintain a statewide stroke database that compiles information and statistics on  
8 stroke care which align with ~~anationally recognized~~ stroke consensus metrics  
9 ~~developed and approved by an organization identified by the state department of~~  
10 ~~health, such as the American heart association and American stroke association.~~

11 The state department of health shall utilize a nationally recognized data set  
12 platform with confidentiality standards no less secure than the stroke registry  
13 data platform. The state department of health shall coordinate with national  
14 voluntary health organizations involved in stroke quality improvement to avoid  
15 duplication and redundancy.

16 b. Require comprehensive stroke centers and primary stroke centers and  
17 encourage acute stroke-ready hospitals and emergency medical services  
18 operations to report data consistent with nationally recognized guidelines on the  
19 treatment of individuals with confirmed stroke within the state.

20 c. Encourage sharing of information and data among health care providers on ways  
21 to improve the quality of care of stroke patients in this state.

22 d. Facilitate the communication and analysis of health information and data among  
23 the health care professionals providing care for individuals with stroke.

24 e. Require the application of evidence-based treatment guidelines regarding the  
25 transitioning of patients to community-based followup care in hospital outpatient,  
26 physician office, and ambulatory clinic settings for ongoing care after hospital  
27 discharge following acute treatment for stroke.

28 2. The state department of health shall establish a data oversight process and implement  
29 a plan for achieving continuous quality improvement in the quality of care provided  
30 under the state comprehensive stroke system for stroke response and treatment which  
31 must:

- 1           a. Analyze data generated by the stroke registry on stroke response and treatment;
- 2           b. Identify potential interventions to improve stroke care in geographic areas or
- 3                 regions of the state; and
- 4           c. Provide recommendations to the state department of health, emergency medical
- 5                 services advisory council, and legislative assembly for the improvement of stroke
- 6                 care and delivery in the state.
- 7        3. Data reported under this section must be made available to the state department of
- 8           health and to other government agencies, or contractors of government agencies,
- 9           which have responsibility for the management and administration of emergency
- 10           medical services throughout the state.
- 11        4. Before June first of each even-numbered year, the state department of health shall
- 12           provide a report to the legislative management regarding progress made toward the
- 13           recommendations provided in this chapter and any recommendations for future
- 14           legislation.

15        **SECTION 5. AMENDMENT.** Section 23-43-05 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
16 amended and reenacted as follows:

17        **23-43-05. ~~Standard of care.~~Stroke system of care task force.**

18        ~~This chapter is not a medical practice guideline and may not be used to restrict the authority~~  
19 ~~of a hospital to provide services for which the hospital has been licensed. This chapter must be~~  
20 ~~interpreted to recognize that all patients should be treated individually based on each patient's~~  
21 ~~needs and circumstances.~~

- 22        1. The state department of health shall establish a stroke system of care task force to
- 23           address matters of triage, treatment, and transport of possible acute stroke patients.
- 24           The stroke system of care task force must include representation from the state
- 25           department of health, the emergency medical services advisory council, the university
- 26           of North Dakota's center for rural health, the American stroke association or similar
- 27           entity, comprehensive stroke centers, primary stroke centers, rural hospitals,
- 28           physicians, and emergency medical services operations.
- 29        2. The task force shall implement the regulations necessary to establish an effective
- 30           stroke system of care in the state, with a focus on serving rural areas. The regulations
- 31           must include protocols for the assessment, stabilization, and appropriate routing of

1           stroke patients by emergency medical services operations, and for coordination and  
2           communication between hospitals, comprehensive stroke centers, primary stroke  
3           centers, and other support services necessary to assure all residents have access to  
4           effective and efficient stroke care.

5           3. The stroke system of care task force shall make recommendations to the state  
6           department of health and health council. Upon receiving such recommendations, the  
7           health council may adopt rules implementing the recommendations.

8           4. As used in this subsection, "telemedicine services" means the use of interactive audio,  
9           video, and other electronic media used for the purpose of diagnosis, consultation, or  
10          treatment of acute stroke. The stroke system of care task force shall recommend  
11          eligible essential health care services for acute stroke care provided through  
12          telemedicine services.

13          **SECTION 6. AMENDMENT.** Section 23-43-06 of the North Dakota Century Code is  
14 amended and reenacted as follows:

15          **23-43-06. Advertisement. General Provisions.**

16          ~~A person may not advertise to the public that a hospital is a primary stroke center unless the~~  
17 ~~hospital has been designated as such under this chapter.~~

18          1. This chapter is not a medical practice guideline and may not be used to restrict the  
19          authority of a hospital to provide services for which the hospital received a license  
20          under state law. Patients must be treated individually based on the needs and  
21          circumstances of each patient.

22          2. A person may not advertise to the public, by way of any medium, that a hospital is a  
23          comprehensive stroke center, primary stroke center, or acute stroke ready hospital  
24          unless the hospital is designated as such by the state department of health.

25          3. The health council may adopt rules to implement this chapter.