



to a second or subsequent term in the same county shall serve a three-year term. Persons who were originally nominees of nursing home chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes, or who were appointed by the board of county commissioners when the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes failed to make nominations, may not be reappointed without the consent of a majority of the nursing home chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes within the county. If the nursing home chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes fail to approve or reject the reappointment within 45 days of being requested by the board of county commissioners, the commissioners may reappoint the member if they so choose.

(d) Any vacancy shall be filled by appointment of a person for a one-year term. Any person replacing a member nominated by the chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes or a person appointed when the chief administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes failed to make a nomination shall be selected from among persons nominated by the administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes, as provided in subsection (b). If the county commissioners fail to appoint members to a committee, or fail to fill a vacancy, the appointment may be made or vacancy filled by the Secretary or the Secretary's designee no sooner than 45 days after the commissioners have been notified of the appointment or vacancy if nomination or approval of the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes is not required. If nominations or approval of the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes is required, the appointment may be made or vacancy filled by the Secretary or the Secretary's designee no sooner than 45 days after the commissioners have received the nomination or approval, or no sooner than 45 days after the 45-day period for action by the nursing home administrators and the governing bodies of the hospitals licensed under Article 5 of G.S. Chapter 131E, which operate nursing homes.

(e) The committee shall elect from its members a chair, to serve a one-year term.

(f) Each member must be a resident of the county which the committee serves. No person or immediate family member of a person with a financial interest in a home served by a committee, or employee or governing board member or immediate family member of an employee or governing board member of a home served by a committee, or immediate family member of a patient in a home served by a committee may be a member of a committee. Membership on a committee shall not be considered an office as defined in G.S. 128-1 or G.S. 128-1.1. Any county commissioner who is appointed to the committee shall be deemed to be serving on the committee in an ex officio capacity. Members of the committee shall serve without compensation, but may be reimbursed for the amount of actual expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties. The names of the committee members and the date of expiration of their terms shall be filed with the Division of Aging, which shall supply a copy to the Division of Health Service Regulation.

(g) The Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, shall develop training materials which shall be distributed to each committee member and nursing home. Each committee member must receive training as specified by the Division of Aging prior to exercising any power under subsection (h) of this section. The Division of Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, shall provide the committees with information, guidelines, training, and consultation to direct them in the performance of their duties.

(h) (1) Each committee shall apprise itself of the general conditions under which the persons are residing in the homes, and shall work for the best interests of the persons in the homes. This may include assisting persons who have grievances with the home and facilitating the resolution of grievances at the local level.

(2) Each committee shall quarterly visit the nursing home it serves. For each official quarterly visit, a majority of the committee members shall be present. In addition, each committee may visit the nursing home it serves whenever it deems it necessary to carry out its duties. In counties with four or more nursing homes, the subcommittee assigned to a home shall perform the duties of the committee under this subdivision, and a majority of the subcommittee members must be present for any visit.

(3) Each member of a committee shall have the right between 10:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. to enter into the facility the committee serves in order to carry out the members' responsibilities. In a county where subcommittees have been established, this right of access shall be limited to homes served by those subcommittees to which the member has been appointed.

(4) The committee or subcommittee may communicate through its chair with the Department or any other agency in relation to the interest of any patient. The identity of any complainant or resident involved in a complaint shall not be disclosed except as permitted under the Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq.

(5) Each home shall cooperate with the committee as it carries out its duties.

(6) Before entering into any nursing home, the committee, subcommittee, or member shall identify itself to the person present at the facility who is in charge of the facility at that time.

(i) Any written communication made by a member of a nursing home advisory committee within the course and scope of the member's duties, as specified in G.S. 131E-128, shall be privileged to the extent provided in this subsection. This privilege shall be a defense in a cause of action for libel if the member was acting in good faith and the statements or communications do not amount to intentional wrongdoing.

To the extent that any nursing home advisory committee or any member thereof is covered by liability insurance, that committee or member shall be deemed to have waived the qualified immunity herein to the extent of indemnification by insurance.

**HISTORY:** 1977, c. 897, s. 2; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1192, s. 1; 1983, c. 143, ss. 4-9; c. 775, ss. 1, 6; 1987, c. 682, s. 1; 1995, c. 254, s. 7; 1997-176, s. 1; 1997-443, s. 11A.118(a); 2007-182, s. 1.

**NOTES:** EFFECT OF AMENDMENTS. --Session Laws 2007-182, s. 1, effective July 5, 2007, substituted "Division of Health Service Regulation" for "Division of Facility Services" at the end of subsection (f).

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