DISCLAIMER

The South Carolina Legislative Council is offering access to the unannotated South Carolina Code of Laws on the Internet as a service to the public. The unannotated South Carolina Code on the General Assembly's website is now current through the 2008 session. The unannotated South Carolina Code, consisting only of Code text and numbering, may be copied from this website at the reader's expense and effort without need for permission.

The Legislative Council is unable to assist users of this service with legal questions. Also, legislative staff cannot respond to requests for legal advice or the application of the law to specific facts. Therefore, to understand and protect your legal rights, you should consult your own private lawyer regarding all legal questions.

While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the unannotated South Carolina Code available on the South Carolina General Assembly's website, the unannotated South Carolina Code is not official, and the state agencies preparing this website and the General Assembly are not responsible for any errors or omissions which may occur in these files. Only the current published volumes of the South Carolina Code of Laws Annotated and any pertinent acts and joint resolutions contain the official version.

Please note that the Legislative Council is not able to respond to individual inquiries regarding research or the features, format, or use of this website. However, you may notify Legislative Printing, Information and Technology Systems at [LPITS@scstatehouse.net](mailto:LPITS@scstatehouse.gov) regarding any apparent errors or omissions in content of Code sections on this website, in which case LPITS will relay the information to appropriate staff members of the South Carolina Legislative Council for investigation.

CHAPTER 9.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

**SECTION 44‑9‑10.** Creation of Department of Mental Health; jurisdiction.

There is hereby created the State Department of Mental Health which shall have jurisdiction over all of the State’s mental hospitals, clinics and centers, joint State and community sponsored mental health clinics and centers and facilities for the treatment and care of alcohol and drug addicts, including the authority to name each facility.

**SECTION 44‑9‑20.** Transfer of powers, duties, records and files from former Mental Health Commission.

All the powers and duties vested in the South Carolina Mental Health Commission immediately prior to March 26, 1964 are hereby transferred to and vested in the Department of Mental Health. All records, files and other papers belonging to the South Carolina Mental Health Commission shall be continued as part of the records and files of the Department of Mental Health.

**SECTION 44‑9‑30.** Creation of South Carolina Mental Health Commission; appointment and terms of members; removal; duties; expenses.

(A)(1) There is created the governing board for the State Department of Mental Health known as the South Carolina Mental Health Commission. The commission consists of seven members appointed by the Governor, upon the advice and consent of the Senate, as follows:

(a) one member from each of the six congressional districts;

(b) one member from the State at large.

(2) The Governor shall consider consumer and family representation when appointing members.

(B) The members serve for terms of five years and until their successors are appointed and qualify. The terms of no more than two members may expire in one year. The Governor may remove a member pursuant to the provisions of Section 1‑3‑240. A vacancy must be filled by the Governor for the unexpired portion of the term.

(C) The commission shall determine policies and promulgate regulations governing the operation of the department and the employment of professional and staff personnel.

(D) The members shall receive the same subsistence, mileage, and per diem provided by law for members of state boards, committees, and commissions.

**SECTION 44‑9‑40.** State Director of Mental Health; appointment and removal; powers and duties; qualifications.

The Mental Health Commission shall appoint and remove a State Director of Mental Health, who is the chief executive of the State Department of Mental Health. Subject to the supervision and control of the Mental Health Commission, the state director shall administer the policies and regulations established by the commission. The director must be a person of proven executive and administrative ability with appropriate education and substantial experience in the field of mental illness treatment. The director must appoint and remove all other officers and employees of the Department of Mental Health, subject to the approval of the Mental Health Commission.

**SECTION 44‑9‑50.** Divisions of Department.

The Department of Mental Health may be divided into such divisions as may be authorized by the director of Mental Health and approved by the commission. One of the divisions must be a Division on Alcohol and Drug Addiction which shall have primary responsibility in the State for treatment of alcohol and drug addicts. One of the divisions must be a Division for Long Term Care which shall have primary responsibility for care and treatment of elderly persons with mental and physical disabilities to the extent that their needs are not met in other facilities either public or private.

**SECTION 44‑9‑60.** Appointment of directors of hospitals; employment of personnel.

The director of the Department of Mental Health may appoint a director of each hospital. Each director must be knowledgeable in the treatment of the mentally ill and in hospital administration. The director of each hospital under the jurisdiction of the Department of Mental Health is responsible for the employment of all personnel at the hospital, subject to the approval of the director of the department. The director of the department may serve as director of one or more hospitals or other mental health facilities.

**SECTION 44‑9‑70.** Administration of Federal funds; development of mental health clinics.

The State Department of Mental Health is hereby designated as the State’s mental health authority for purposes of administering Federal funds allotted to South Carolina under the provisions of the National Mental Health Act, as amended. The State Department of Mental Health is further designated as the State agency authorized to administer minimum standards and requirements for mental health clinics as conditions for participation in Federal‑State grants‑in‑aid under the provisions of the National Mental Health Act, as amended, and is authorized to promote and develop community mental health outpatient clinics. Provided, that nothing in this article shall be construed to prohibit the operation of outpatient mental health clinics by the South Carolina Medical College Hospital in Charleston. Provided, further, that nothing herein shall be construed to include any of the functions or responsibilities now granted the Department of Health and Environmental Control, or the administration of the State Hospital Construction Act (Hill‑Burton Act), as provided in the 1976 Code of Laws and amendments thereto.

**SECTION 44‑9‑80.** Utilization of Federal funds provided to improve services to patients.

Payments made to a mental health facility which are derived in whole or in part from Federal funds which become available after June 30, 1967, and which are provided with the stipulation that they be used to improve services to patients shall not be considered fees from paying patients under the terms of Act No. 1100 of 1964 but may be utilized by the State Department of Mental Health to improve South Carolina’s comprehensive mental health program.

**SECTION 44‑9‑90.** Powers and duties of Mental Health Commission.

The commission shall:

(1) form a body corporate in deed and in law with all the powers incident to corporations;

(2) cooperate with persons in charge of penal institutions in this State for the purpose of providing proper care and treatment for mental patients confined in penal institutions because of emergency;

(3) inaugurate and maintain an appropriate mental health education and public relations program;

(4) collect statistics bearing on mental illness, drug addiction, and alcoholism;

(5) provide vocational training and medical treatment which must tend to the mental and physical betterment of patients and which is designed to lessen the increase of mental illness, drug addiction, and alcoholism;

(6) encourage the directors of hospitals and their medical staffs in the investigation and study of these subjects and of mental health treatment in general; and

(7) provide a statewide system for the delivery of mental health services to treat, care for, reduce, and prevent mental illness and provide mental health services for citizens of this State, whether or not in a hospital. The system must include services to prevent or postpone the commitment or recommitment of citizens to hospitals.

**SECTION 44‑9‑100.** Additional powers and duties of commission.

The commission may:

(1) prescribe the form of and information to be contained in applications, records, reports, and medical certificates provided for under this chapter, Chapter 11, Chapter 13, Article 1 of Chapter 15, Chapter 17, Chapter 22, Chapter 23, Chapter 24, Chapter 27, Chapter 48, and Chapter 52;

(2) require reports from the director of a state hospital relating to the admission, examination, diagnosis, discharge, or conditional discharge of a patient;

(3) investigate complaints made by a patient or by a person on behalf of a patient;

(4) adopt regulations not inconsistent with this chapter, Chapter 11, Chapter 13, Article 1 of Chapter 15, Chapter 17, Chapter 22, Chapter 23, Chapter 24, Chapter 27, Chapter 48, and Chapter 52 as it may find to be reasonably necessary for the government of all institutions over which it has authority and of state mental health facilities and the proper and efficient treatment of persons with a mental illness or substance abuse disorder;

(5) take appropriate action to initiate and develop relationships and agreements with state, local, federal, and private agencies, hospitals, and clinics as the commission considers necessary to increase and enhance the accessibility and delivery of emergency and all other types of mental health services.

**SECTION 44‑9‑110.** Acceptance of gifts and grants by Commission.

The Mental Health Commission may accept on behalf of the Department of Mental Health or any of its facilities or services, gifts, bequests, devises, grants, donations of money or real and personal property of whatever kind, but no such gift or grant shall be accepted upon the condition that it shall diminish an obligation due the Department. The Commission may refuse to accept any such gift or grant and the acceptance of any such gift or grant shall not incur any obligation on the part of the State. Any gift or grant given to a specific facility or service shall be used for that facility or service only, or to its successor. The Commission may promulgate rules and regulations governing the disposition of such gifts and grants.

**SECTION 44‑9‑120.** Annual report of Commission.

The Commission shall submit an annual report to the Governor before the eleventh day of January of each year setting forth its activities, the financial affairs and the state and condition of the State mental health facilities and any other statistical information which is usually required of facilities of the type over which it has charge. The report shall include any recommendations which in the opinion of the Commission will improve the mental health program of the State. A copy of the report shall also be submitted to the General Assembly.

**SECTION 44‑9‑160.** Construction of certain references in Code.

Wherever in the 1976 Code reference is made to the State Hospital, it shall mean a state hospital; wherever reference is made requiring the signature of the superintendent of any mental health facility, it shall mean the superintendent or his designee; and wherever reference is made to the State Commissioner of Mental Health, it shall mean the State Director of the Department of Mental Health.