

Senate Bill No. 672

(By Senators Stollings, Miller, Beach, Williams, Browning,
Foster, Hall, K. Facemyer and Barnes)

[Introduced February 20, 2012; referred to the Committee on the
Judiciary.]

A BILL to amend and reenact §16-5C-15 of the Code of West Virginia,
1931, as amended, relating to clarifying that actions brought
for damages for injuries suffered in a nursing home are
subject to the same liability limitations as other medical
professional liability actions.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

That §16-5C-15 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended,
be amended and reenacted to read as follows:

ARTICLE 5C. NURSING HOMES.

**§16-5C-15. Unlawful acts; penalties; injunctions; private right
of action.**

(a) Whoever advertises, announces, establishes or maintains,
or is engaged in establishing or maintaining a nursing home without
a license granted under section six of this article, or who
prevents, interferes with or impedes in any way the lawful

1 enforcement of this article ~~shall be~~ is guilty of a misdemeanor
2 and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished for the first
3 offense by a fine of not more than \$100, or by ~~imprisonment~~
4 confinement in ~~the county or regional~~ jail for a period of not more
5 than ninety days, or by both ~~such~~ fine and ~~imprisonment~~
6 confinement, at the discretion of the court. For each subsequent
7 offense, the fine may be increased to not more than \$250, with
8 ~~imprisonment~~ confinement in ~~the county or regional~~ jail for a
9 period of not more than ninety days, or by both ~~such~~ fine and
10 ~~imprisonment~~ confinement, at the discretion of the court. Each day
11 of a continuing violation after conviction ~~shall be~~ is considered
12 a separate offense.

13 (b) The director may in his or her discretion bring an action
14 to enforce compliance with this article or any rule or order
15 hereunder whenever it ~~shall appear~~ appears to the director that any
16 person has engaged in, or is engaging in, an act or practice in
17 violation of this article or any rule or order hereunder, or
18 whenever it ~~shall appear~~ appears to the director that any person
19 has aided, abetted or caused, or is aiding, abetting or causing
20 such an act or practice. Upon application by the director, the
21 circuit court of the county in which the conduct has occurred or is
22 occurring, or if emergency circumstances occur, the circuit court
23 of Kanawha County, ~~shall have~~ has jurisdiction to grant without
24 bond a permanent or temporary injunction, decree or restraining

1 order.

2 Whenever the director ~~shall have~~ has refused to grant or renew
3 a license, or ~~shall have~~ has revoked a license required by law to
4 operate or conduct a nursing home, or ~~shall have~~ has ordered a
5 person to refrain from conduct violating the rules of the director,
6 and the person ~~deeming himself or herself aggrieved by such refusal~~
7 ~~or revocation or order shall have~~ has appealed the action of the
8 director, the court may, during pendency of ~~such~~ the appeal, issue
9 a restraining order or injunction upon proof that the operation of
10 the nursing home or its failure to comply with the order of the
11 director adversely affects the well-being or safety of the
12 residents of the nursing home. Should a person who is refused a
13 license or the renewal of a license to operate or conduct a nursing
14 home or whose license to operate is revoked or who has been ordered
15 to refrain from conduct or activity which violates the rules of the
16 director, fail to appeal or should ~~such~~ the appeal be decided
17 favorably to the director, then the court shall issue a permanent
18 injunction upon proof that the person is operating or conducting a
19 nursing home without a license as required by law, or has continued
20 to violate the rules of the director.

21 (c) Any nursing home that deprives a resident of any right or
22 benefit created or established for the well-being of this resident
23 by the terms of any contract, by any state statute or rule, or by
24 any applicable federal statute or regulation, ~~shall~~ may be liable

1 to the resident for injuries suffered as a result of such
2 deprivation. ~~Upon a finding that a resident has been deprived of~~
3 ~~such a right or benefit, and that the resident has been injured as~~
4 ~~a result of such deprivation, and unless there is a finding that~~
5 ~~the nursing home exercised all care reasonably necessary to prevent~~
6 ~~and limit the deprivation and injury to the resident, compensatory~~
7 ~~damages shall be assessed in an amount sufficient to compensate the~~
8 ~~resident for such injury.~~ Any actions brought under this subsection
9 are subject to the limitations and provisions of article seven-b,
10 chapter fifty-five of this code. In addition, where the
11 deprivation of ~~any such~~ the right or benefit is found to have been
12 willful or in reckless disregard of the lawful rights of the
13 resident, punitive damages may be assessed. A resident may also
14 maintain an action pursuant to this section for any other type of
15 relief, including injunctive and declaratory relief, permitted by
16 law. Exhaustion of any available administrative remedies ~~may is~~
17 ~~not be~~ required prior to commencement of suit ~~hereunder~~ under this
18 subsection.

19 The amount of damages recovered by a resident, in an action
20 brought pursuant to this section, ~~shall be~~ is exempt for purposes
21 of determining initial or continuing eligibility for medical
22 assistance under article four, chapter nine of this code, and may
23 neither be taken into consideration nor required to be applied
24 toward the payment or part payment of the cost of medical care or

1 services available under ~~said~~ that article.

2 Any waiver by a resident or his or her legal representative of
3 the right to commence an action under this section, whether oral or
4 in writing, ~~shall be null and~~ is void as contrary to public policy.

5 (d) The penalties and remedies provided in this section are
6 cumulative and ~~shall be~~ are in addition to all other penalties and
7 remedies provided by law.

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NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide technical clean-up to clarify that the Legislature originally intended that all actions brought against a nursing home under are subject to all the limitations and provisions set forth in the Medical Professional Liability Act.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.