

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 HOUSE BILL 1224

By: West (Kevin)

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5  
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to health care; defining terms;  
8 granting certain protections to health care  
9 institutions and health care payors; requiring  
10 certain disclosure; providing certain immunity from  
11 civil actions; providing certain construction;  
12 providing exception; conferring certain rights on  
13 medical practitioners, health care institutions, and  
14 health care payors; authorizing certain requirement  
15 by health care institution; prohibiting certain  
16 discrimination against medical practitioners and  
17 health care institutions; granting certain immunities  
18 to medical practitioners and health care  
19 institutions; granting additional protections;  
20 prohibiting certain disciplinary actions by  
21 professional licensing board or state agency;  
22 requiring certain provision of complaint; providing  
23 remedy for failure to notify; making certain  
24 interference unlawful; providing remedies for  
unlawful interference; directing promulgation of  
certain rules; providing certain construction;  
providing for codification; and providing an  
effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728g of Title 63, unless there  
is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1 As used in this act, unless the context requires otherwise:

2 1. "Conscience" means the ethical, moral, or religious beliefs  
3 or principles held by a medical practitioner, health care  
4 institution, or health care payor. With respect to institutional or  
5 corporate persons, as opposed to individual persons, the term is  
6 determined by reference to that entity's or body's governing  
7 documents, including but not limited to published ethical, moral, or  
8 religious guidelines or directives, mission statements,  
9 constitutions, articles of incorporation, bylaws, policies, or  
10 regulations;

11 2. a. "Discrimination" means an adverse action taken  
12 against, or a threat of adverse action communicated  
13 to, a medical practitioner, health care institution,  
14 or health care payor as a result of the medical  
15 practitioner, health care institution, or health care  
16 payor's refusal to participate in a health care  
17 service on the basis of conscience, including but not  
18 limited to termination of employment; transfer from  
19 current position; demotion from current position;  
20 adverse administrative action; reassignment to a  
21 different shift or job title; increased administrative  
22 duties; denial of staff privileges; denial of board  
23 certification; loss of career specialty; reduction of  
24 wages, benefits, or privileges; refusal to award a

1 grant, contract, or other program; refusal to provide  
2 residency training opportunities; denial, deprivation,  
3 or disqualification of licensure; withholding or  
4 disqualifying from financial aid and other assistance;  
5 impediment of the creation or improvement of a health  
6 care institution or health care payor; impediment of  
7 the acquisition or merger of a health care institution  
8 or health care payor; the threat of any of the  
9 preceding actions; or any other penalty, disciplinary,  
10 or retaliatory action, whether executed or threatened.

11 b. The term does not include the negotiation or purchase  
12 of insurance by a nongovernment entity;

13 3. "Health care institution" means a public or private  
14 hospital, outpatient center for primary care, medical center,  
15 physician organization, professional association, outpatient center  
16 for surgical services, private physician's office, pharmacy, long-  
17 term care facility, medical school, nursing school, medical training  
18 facility, or any other entity or location in which health care  
19 services are performed. The term includes but is not limited to  
20 organizations, corporations, partnerships, associations, agencies,  
21 networks, sole proprietorships, or joint ventures;

22 4. "Health care payor" means an employer, health plan, health  
23 maintenance organization, insurance company, management services  
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1 organization, or another entity that pays for or arranges for  
2 payment for a health care service, in whole or in part;

3 5. "Health care service" means medical research or medical care  
4 provided to a patient or client at any time during the patient's or  
5 client's course of treatment, including but not limited to initial  
6 examination; testing; diagnosis; referral; dispensing or  
7 administration of a drug, medication, or device; psychological  
8 therapy or counseling; research; prognosis; therapy; record-making  
9 procedures; notes related to treatment, set up, or performance of a  
10 surgery or procedure; or any other care or service performed or  
11 provided by a medical practitioner;

12 6. "Medical practitioner" means a person who is or may be asked  
13 to participate in a health care service. The term includes but is  
14 not limited to physicians; physician assistants; nurses including  
15 but not limited to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses; nurse aides;  
16 allied health professionals; medical assistants; hospital employees;  
17 employees of an outpatient center for primary care, outpatient  
18 center for surgical services, or long-term care facility;  
19 pharmacists; pharmacy technicians; pharmacy employees; medical  
20 school faculty and students; nursing school faculty and students;  
21 psychology and counseling faculty and students; medical researchers;  
22 laboratory technicians; counselors; social workers; or any other  
23 person who facilitates or participates in a health care service;

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1 7. "Participate in a health care service" means to provide,  
2 perform, assist with, facilitate, refer for, counsel for, advise  
3 with regard to, admit for the purposes of providing, or take part in  
4 any way in providing a health care service; and

5 8. "Person" means one or more individuals, partnerships,  
6 associations, or corporations.

7 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
8 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728h of Title 63, unless there  
9 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

10 A. 1. A health care institution or health care payor may not  
11 be required to participate in or pay for a health care service that  
12 violates the health care institution's or health care payor's  
13 conscience, including by permitting the use of its facilities.

14 2. A health care payor, other than an employer or other entity  
15 whose health plan is not subject to the jurisdiction of the  
16 Insurance Commissioner, shall list any health care service that it  
17 may refuse to pay for on the basis of conscience in the applicable  
18 policy.

19 B. Except as provided in subsection D of this section, refusal  
20 to participate in or pay for a health care service under this  
21 section may not give rise to liability of the health care  
22 institution or health care payor for damages allegedly arising from  
23 the refusal or be the basis for any discrimination, discipline, or  
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1 other recriminatory action against the health care institution,  
2 health care payor, or any personnel, agent, or governing board.

3 C. Nothing in this section may be construed to relieve a health  
4 care institution of the requirement to provide emergency medical  
5 treatment to all patients set forth in the federal Emergency Medical  
6 Treatment and Labor Act, 42 U.S.C., Section 1395dd.

7 D. The immunity provisions of this section do not apply to a  
8 health care institution or health care payor owned or operated by  
9 this state or a political subdivision of the state.

10 E. Notwithstanding any other provision of this act to the  
11 contrary, a religious medical practitioner, health care institution,  
12 or health care payor that holds itself out to the public as  
13 religious, states in its governing documents that it has a religious  
14 purpose or mission, and has internal operating policies or  
15 procedures that implement its religious beliefs, shall have the  
16 right to make employment, staffing, contracting, and admitting  
17 privilege decisions consistent with its religious beliefs.

18 SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
19 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728i of Title 63, unless there  
20 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

21 A. A medical practitioner has the right not to participate in a  
22 health care service that violates the medical practitioner's  
23 conscience. A health care institution may not be held liable for  
24 the exercise of conscience not to participate in a health care

1 service by a medical practitioner employed, contracted, or granted  
2 admitting privileges by the health care institution.

3 B. A health care institution may require the exercise of  
4 conscience as a basis for not participating in a health care service  
5 to be made in writing and signed by the medical practitioner  
6 objecting. A writing made under this subsection may refer only  
7 generally to the grounds of conscience.

8 C. A medical practitioner's refusal to participate in a health  
9 care service based on an exercise of conscience may not be a basis  
10 for discrimination, discipline, or other recriminatory action  
11 against the medical practitioner.

12 D. A medical practitioner may not be held liable for damages  
13 allegedly arising from the exercise of conscience not to participate  
14 in a health care service.

15 SECTION 4. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
16 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728j of Title 63, unless there  
17 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

18 The exercise of conscience not to participate in a health care  
19 service by a medical practitioner, health care institution, or  
20 health care payor may not be grounds for loss of any privileges or  
21 immunities or for the loss of any public benefits.

22 SECTION 5. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
23 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728k of Title 63, unless there  
24 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

1       A. A medical practitioner or health care institution may not be  
2 discriminated against because the medical practitioner or health  
3 care institution:

4       1. Provides, causes to be provided, or intends to provide or  
5 cause to be provided information relating to a suspected violation  
6 of this act to the medical practitioner or health care institution's  
7 employer, the Attorney General, the United States Department of  
8 Health and Human Services, or any state or federal agency charged  
9 with protecting health care rights of conscience; or

10       2. Testifies, assists, participates, or intends to testify,  
11 assist, or participate in a proceeding concerning a violation of  
12 this act.

13       B. Except as provided in subsection C of this section, it is  
14 unlawful to discriminate against a medical practitioner because the  
15 medical practitioner discloses information that the medical  
16 practitioner reasonably believes evidences:

17       1. A violation of any law, rule, or regulation;

18       2. A violation of any standard of care or ethical guidelines  
19 for the provision of any health care service; or

20       3. Gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of  
21 authority, practices or methods of treatment that may put patient  
22 health at risk, or a substantial and specific danger to public  
23 health or safety.

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1 C. Nothing in this section may be construed to exempt a person  
2 from any applicable state or federal confidentiality and patient  
3 privacy requirements including but not limited to the federal Health  
4 Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C.,  
5 Section 1320d et seq.

6 SECTION 6. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
7 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-7281 of Title 63, unless there  
8 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

9 A. A professional licensing board or other state agency that  
10 grants licensure or certification may not reprimand, sanction, or  
11 revoke or threaten to revoke a license, certificate, or registration  
12 of a medical practitioner who is licensed or certified by the board  
13 or agency for engaging in speech or expressive activity protected  
14 under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, unless  
15 the board or agency demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence  
16 that the medical practitioner's speech was the direct cause of  
17 physical harm to a person with whom the medical practitioner had a  
18 practitioner-patient relationship within the two (2) years  
19 immediately preceding the incident of physical harm.

20 B. 1. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving a  
21 complaint that may result in revocation of a medical practitioner's  
22 license, certificate, or registration, the board or agency shall  
23 provide the medical practitioner with a copy of the complaint.  
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1           2. If the board or agency fails to provide the complaint within  
2 fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt, the board or agency shall  
3 pay the medical practitioner an administrative penalty of Five  
4 Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) for each week of noncompliance.

5           SECTION 7.           NEW LAW           A new section of law to be codified  
6 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728m of Title 63, unless there  
7 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

8           A. It is unlawful to interfere or attempt to interfere with the  
9 right not to participate in a health care service or the  
10 whistleblower and free speech rights and protections authorized by  
11 this act, whether by duress, coercion, or any other means.

12           B. A medical practitioner, health care institution, or health  
13 care payor injured by unlawful interference is entitled to:

14           1. Injunctive relief, when appropriate, including but not  
15 limited to reinstatement of a medical practitioner to the medical  
16 practitioner's previous position, reinstatement of board  
17 certification, and relicensure of a health care institution or  
18 health care payor;

19           2. Monetary damages for injuries suffered; and

20           3. Reasonable costs and attorney fees.

21           SECTION 8.           NEW LAW           A new section of law to be codified  
22 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728n of Title 63, unless there  
23 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

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1 The Insurance Commissioner shall promulgate reasonable and  
2 necessary rules concerning the implementation of this act relating  
3 to those insurers under its jurisdiction.

4 SECTION 9. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified  
5 in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 1-728o of Title 63, unless there  
6 is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

7 This act is supplemental to and may not be construed as  
8 modifying or limiting the rights and remedies provided in the  
9 Freedom of Conscience Act, Section 1-728a et seq. of Title 63 of the  
10 Oklahoma Statutes.

11 SECTION 10. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.

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