



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 27255
Raleigh, NC 27611-7255

Phone: (919) 814-0700
Fax: (919) 715-0135

January 28, 2020

Dear Facility Administrator,

With every election, the county boards of elections receive an increasing number of questions about how to provide lawful assistance to citizens who are elderly or ill.

As you are probably aware, owners, managers, directors, and employees of hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, or rest homes (“facilities”) are legally prohibited from providing to their patients assistance with absentee voting. Assistance includes making a request for an absentee ballot, signing the voter’s absentee ballot application or certificate as a witness, or marking the voter’s absentee ballot or assisting the voter in marking an absentee ballot. Violation of this law is a Class I felony [N.C.G.S. § 163-226.3].

A voter *may* receive assistance from a near relative (spouse, sibling, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, stepparent, or stepchild) or legal guardian. In recognition of the fact that some facility residents and patients may find it difficult to find persons who can assist them with absentee voting, the law requires each county board of elections to assemble “Multipartisan Assistance Teams” (MATs). The purpose of MATs is to ensure that facility residents are provided lawful assistance in voting, without regard for political affiliation. Persons selected to participate in these teams are trained to serve impartially and to avoid any suggestion or appearance of bias for or against candidates or issues. MATs are authorized to help voters in the following ways, with specific legal requirements:

- Providing voter registration services
- Requesting an absentee ballot
- Serving as an absentee witness
- Marking the absentee ballot
- Sealing the ballot and completing the absentee application
- Mailing the voted absentee ballot in the closest U.S. mail depository or mailbox, if the voter has a disability

In the event a resident requires the help of a team member with the actual marking of a ballot, the voter’s selection is kept in strict confidence.

The law requires that MATs be available upon request of the facility. If a facility, or a patient or resident of the facility, requests a visit from a MAT, the county board of elections must schedule

the visit within seven days if it is able to do so. If the county board of elections is unable to schedule the visit within seven days, the voter can receive assistance from any person other than:

- An owner, manager, director, or employee of the facility.
- An individual who holds elective office.
- An individual who is a candidate for office.
- An individual who holds any office in a State, congressional district, county, or precinct political party or organization, or who is a campaign manager or treasurer for any candidate or political party. A delegate to a convention is not considered a party office.

If you would like to schedule a visit from a MAT, please contact your county board of elections office. Contact information for county boards of elections can be found at <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/BOEInfo/>. With your help, or the help of your facility's site coordinator, we can schedule a time during which the greatest number of voters in your facility who need assistance will be available.

Sincerely,



Karen Brinson Bell
Executive Director
North Carolina State Board of Elections