§ 8-53. Communications between health care provider and patient.

No person, duly authorized to practice under Article 1 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, shall be required to disclose any information which he may have acquired in attending a patient in a professional character, and which information was necessary to enable him to prescribe for such patient as a physician, or to do any act for him as a surgeon, and no such information shall be considered public records under G.S. 132-1. Confidential information obtained in medical records shall be furnished only on the authorization of the patient, or if deceased, the executor, administrator, or, in the case of unadministered estates, the next of kin. Any resident or presiding judge in the district, either at the trial or prior thereto, or the Industrial Commission pursuant to law may, subject to G.S. 8-53.6, compel disclosure if in his opinion disclosure is necessary to a proper administration of justice. If the case is in district court the judge shall be a district court judge, and if the case is in superior court the judge shall be a superior court judge. (1885, c. 159; Rev., s. 1621; C.S., s. 1798; 1969, c. 914; 1977, c. 1118; 1983, c. 410, ss. 1, 2; c. 471; 2019-191, s. 41.)