

§ 97-78. Salaries and expenses; administrator, executive secretary, deputy commissioners, and other staff assistance; annual report.

(a) The salary of each commissioner shall be the same as that fixed from time to time for district attorneys except that the commissioner designated as chair shall receive one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) additional per annum.

(b) The Commission may appoint an administrator whose duties shall be prescribed by the Commission. The Commission may appoint an executive secretary whose duties shall be prescribed by the Commission, and who, upon entering upon his duties, shall give bond in such sum as may be fixed by the Commission. The Commission may also employ such clerical or other assistance as it may deem necessary, and fix the compensation of its staff, except that the salaries of the administrator and the executive secretary shall be fixed by subsection (b1) of this section. The compensation of Commission staff shall be in keeping with the compensation paid to the persons employed to do similar work in other State departments.

(b1) The salary of the administrator shall be ninety percent (90%) of the salary of a commissioner. The salary of the executive secretary shall be ninety percent (90%) of the salary of a commissioner.

(b2) The Chairman of the Industrial Commission shall designate one deputy commissioner as chief deputy commissioner. The salary of the chief deputy commissioner shall be ninety percent (90%) of the salary of a commissioner.

(b3) The salary of deputy commissioners shall be based upon years of experience as a deputy commissioner as follows:

- (1) Seventy-five percent (75%) of the salary of a commissioner, with three years of experience or less.
- (2) Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the salary of a commissioner, with more than three but less than seven years of experience.
- (3) Eighty percent (80%) of the salary of a commissioner, with seven or more but less than 10 years of experience.
- (4) Eighty-three percent (83%) of the salary of a commissioner, with 10 or more but less than 12 years of experience.
- (5) Eighty-five percent (85%) of the salary of a commissioner, with 12 or more years experience.

(b4) In lieu of merit and other incremental raises, the administrator, executive secretary, chief deputy commissioner, and deputy commissioners shall receive longevity pay on the same basis as is provided to other employees subject to the North Carolina Human Resources Act.

(c) The members of the Commission and its assistants shall be entitled to receive from the State their actual and necessary expenses while traveling on the business of the Commission, but such expenses shall be certified by the person who incurred the same, and shall be approved by the chairman of the Commission before payment is made.

(d) All salaries and expenses of the Commission shall be audited and paid out of the State treasury, in the manner prescribed for similar expenses in other departments or branches of the State service, and to defray such salaries and expenses a sufficient appropriation shall be made under the General Appropriation Act as made to other departments, commissions and agencies of the State government.

(e) No later than October 1 of each year, the Commission shall publish annually for free distribution a report of the administration of this Article, together with such recommendations as the Commission deems advisable. No later than October 1 of each year, the Commission shall submit this report to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on General Government, the Senate Appropriations Committee on General Government and Information Technology, and the House Appropriations Committee on General Government.

(f) Every four years beginning April 1, 2022, the Commission shall prepare and implement a strategic plan for accomplishing all of the following:

- (1) Tracking compliance with the provisions of G.S. 97-18(b), (c), and (d), and establishing a procedure to enforce compliance with the requirements of these subsections.
- (2) Expeditiously resolving requests for, or disputes involving, medical compensation under G.S. 97-25, including selection of a physician, change of physician, the specific treatment involved, and the provider of such treatment.

(g) The Commission shall demonstrate its success in implementing its strategic plan under subsection (f) of this section by including all of the following in its annual report under subsection (e) of this section:

- (1) The total number of claims made during the preceding fiscal year, the total number of claims in which compliance was not timely made, and, for each claim, the date the claim was filed, the date by which compliance was required, the date of actual compliance, and any sanctions or other remedial action imposed by the Commission.
- (2) The total number of requests for, and disputes involving, medical compensation under G.S. 97-25 in which final disposition was not made within 75 days of the filing of the motion with the Commission, and, for each such request or dispute, the date the motion or other initial pleading was filed, the date on which final disposition was made. (1929, c. 120, s. 52; 1931, c. 274, s. 9; 1941, c. 358, s. 2; 1947, c. 823; 1957, c. 541, s. 6; 1971, c. 527, s. 1; c. 1147, s. 1; 1983, c. 717, s. 20; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 164; 1997-443, s. 33.4; 1998-212, s. 28.18(a); 2005-276, s. 29.20(b); 2007-323, ss. 13.4A(a), (b); 2013-382, s. 9.1(c); 2013-413, s. 60(a); 2014-77, s. 5; 2014-115, ss. 17, 55.4(c); 2017-57, s. 14.1(p); 2021-180, s. 37.8(a).)