



www.lsc.ohio.gov

# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research  
and Drafting

Legislative Budget  
Office

H.B. 324  
(1\_134\_1004-3)  
134<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 324's Bill Analysis](#)

**Version:** In House Health

**Primary Sponsors:** Reps. Click and Lipps

**Local Impact Statement Procedure Required:** Yes

Jacquelyn Schroeder, Senior Budget Analyst

### Highlights

- Government-owned hospitals could experience an increase in costs to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to visitors or to take other precautionary measures to permit in-person visits during certain situations.
- The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) will experience an increase in costs to establish the waiver, accept and review waiver applications from hospitals, and to adopt related rules. Waiver review costs will depend on the number of applications submitted to ODH.

### Detailed Analysis

#### Hospital visitation

The bill requires hospitals, in the absence of a public health order to the contrary, to permit in-person visits (1) during a public health emergency related to the spread of a contagious disease, or (2) any time when a contagious disease is unusually prevalent. Visits must be permitted for the patient's family, caretakers, or clergy persons to the same extent as was permitted before the emergency was declared or the disease prevalence increased and requires hospitals to permit evening and weekend visits. In addition, the bill requires visits to be conducted so as not to endanger the health of hospital patients, staff, or other individuals in the hospital. However, the bill permits a hospital to take certain precautionary measures related to in-person visits during the above situations. Measures include requiring visitor screening for symptoms of the contagious disease before entry, prohibiting entry if such symptoms exist, limiting movement throughout the hospital, requiring a visitor to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), and limiting the number of visitors at one time, among others. The bill also permits a hospital to request from the Director of Health a waiver from the requirement that visitors use PPE if the hospital has a shortage of PPE. The Director may adopt rules as necessary

to carry out this requirement. The bill prohibits a public health order issued by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) or a local board of health regarding the spread of a contagious disease from preventing reasonable visitation by the patient's immediate family or other designated individuals, if the patient's condition becomes terminal. The bill also specifies that the bill's provisions are not to be construed or implemented in such a way as to conflict with federal regulatory guidance.

### **Fiscal impact**

Government-owned hospitals could experience an increase in costs to provide PPE to visitors or to take other precautionary measures during certain situations described by the bill. This may include screening visitors for symptoms of the contagious disease prior to entry of the hospital or designating a visitor space. However, costs will depend on the hospital policies in place at that time versus the measures implemented. Additionally, ODH will experience an increase in costs to establish the above-mentioned waiver, accept and review such waivers from hospitals, and to adopt related rules if ODH decides to do so. Waiver review costs will depend on the number of waiver applications submitted to ODH for review and approval.