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H.B. 324
(1_134_1004-5)
134th 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

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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.

Detailed Analysis

Hospital visitation

The bill requires hospitals 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. Hospitals must make reasonable efforts to conduct those visits in conformity with its visitation guidelines in effect before the emergency was declared or the disease prevalence increased. In addition, the bill requires visits to be conducted in such a way to protect the health of hospital patients, staff, or other individuals in the hospital facility. 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 are displayed or disclosed, 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 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 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.

Synopsis of Fiscal Effect Changes

The substitute bill, I_134_1004-5, removes provisions included in the prior substitute bill, I_134_1004-3, regarding the creation of a waiver from the requirement that visitors use personal protective equipment (PPE) if a hospital has a shortage of PPE, including the provision allowing the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to adopt rules as necessary to carry out that requirement. As a result, ODH would not incur costs to establish such a waiver, accept and review waivers, or to adopt rules. Government-owned hospitals would also not incur any costs to prepare or submit an application for such a waiver to ODH. The bill also makes various other changes that are not anticipated to have a significant fiscal impact.