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HOUSE BILL 1983

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State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Representatives Rude, Caldier, Dufault, Eslick, Sutherland, Volz, Graham, and Gilday

Read first time 01/13/22. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

1 AN ACT Relating to a hospital patient's right to visitors; and  
2 adding new sections to chapter 70.41 RCW.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 70.41  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 Subject to reasonable restrictions to protect the rights of  
7 others and to the patient's right to deny or withdraw consent at any  
8 time, a patient has the right and a hospital licensed under this  
9 chapter may not interfere with the patient's right to visitors  
10 including the patient's immediate family or other relatives and  
11 others who are visiting with the consent of the patient.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 70.41  
13 RCW to read as follows:

14 (1) In circumstances in which limitations must be placed on  
15 patient visitation due to a public health emergency or other threat  
16 to the health and safety of the patients and staff of a hospital,  
17 patients must still be allowed access to an essential support person,  
18 subject to reasonable limitations on such access tailored to  
19 protecting the health and safety of essential support persons,  
20 patients, and staff.

1 (2) The hospital shall allow private, in-person access to the  
2 patient by the essential support person in the patient's room.

3 (3) The hospital shall develop and implement reasonable  
4 conditions on access by an essential support person tailored to  
5 protecting the health and safety of the essential support person,  
6 patients, and staff, based upon the particular public health  
7 emergency or other health or safety threat.

8 (4) The hospital may temporarily suspend an individual's  
9 designation as an essential support person for failure to comply with  
10 these requirements or reasonable conditions developed and implemented  
11 by the hospital that are tailored to protecting the health and safety  
12 of the essential support person, patient, and staff, based upon the  
13 particular public health emergency or other health or safety threat.  
14 Unless immediate action is necessary to prevent an imminent and  
15 serious threat to the health or safety of patients or staff, the  
16 hospital shall attempt to resolve the concerns with the essential  
17 support person and the patient prior to temporarily suspending the  
18 individual's designation as an essential support person. The  
19 suspension shall last no longer than 48 hours during which time the  
20 hospital shall contact the department for guidance and shall provide  
21 the essential support person information regarding the steps the  
22 essential support person must take to resume the visits, such as  
23 agreeing to comply with reasonable conditions tailored to protecting  
24 the health and safety of the essential support person, patients, and  
25 staff, based upon the particular public health emergency or other  
26 health or safety threat.

27 (5) An essential support person must be:

28 (a) At least 18 years of age; and

29 (b) Designated by the patient, or by the patient's  
30 representative, if the patient is determined to be incapacitated.

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