H-2031.1

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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(5) An essential support person must be:

(a) At least 18 years of age; and

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

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