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**Health Care & Wellness Committee**

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**ESB 5305**

**Brief Description:** Requiring hospitals to report when providing treatment for bullet wounds, gunshot wounds, and stab wounds to all patients.

**Sponsors:** Senators Becker, Schlicher, Kline, Dammeier, Delvin, Ericksen, Parlette and Carrell.

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill**

- Requires that a health care provider contact a patient advocate if he or she believes that a patient's bullet, gunshot, or stab wound may have been caused by domestic violence.

**Hearing Date:** 3/21/13

**Staff:** Chris Blake (786-7392).

**Background:**

The Uniform Health Care Information Act provides that a health care provider may not disclose health care information about a patient unless there is a statutory exception or a written authorization by the patient. One statutory exception requires a health care provider or health care facility, upon request from law enforcement, to disclose specific information about patients with bullet, gunshot, or stab wounds to law enforcement agencies. The information to be disclosed includes the name, residence, sex, and age of the patient; the patient's condition; the patient's diagnosis or extent and location of injuries; whether the patient was conscious upon admission; the name of the health care provider; and transfer and discharge information.

Hospitals regulations have similar requirements to report bullet, gunshot, and stab wounds to law enforcement authorities as soon as reasonably possible if a patient is unconscious, regardless of whether law enforcement makes a request. Information to be reported includes the name, residence, sex, and age of the patient; whether the patient has received a bullet, gunshot, or stab wound; and the name of the treating health care provider. Under this reporting requirement, hospitals are provided immunity for good faith reports that do not constitute gross negligence.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Bill:**

Under hospital reporting requirements related to bullet, gunshot, and stab wounds, if the health care provider believes that the patient's injury could have been caused by domestic violence, the hospital must alert a patient advocate, such as a case manager, social worker, or domestic violence advocate. The law enforcement officer and the patient advocate must determine whether there should be a delay in contact with the patient, suspect, or other witness to assist in assuring the safety of the patient or his or her family.

Hospital reporting requirements related to bullet, gunshot, and stab wounds apply all patients with such injuries, rather than only those who are unconscious.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.