

COMMITTEES

CHAIR: HEALTH

FINANCE

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



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**State Representative P. Scott Lipps
Ohio House of Representatives**

Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and Members of the House Health Committee, thank you very much for having us present sponsor testimony on Substitute House Bill 324 today.

As my Joint Sponsor Representative Click mentioned earlier, this bill would provide familial and pastoral access to patients during a public health emergency.

In the event that a public health emergency is declared, a hospital must permit in-person patient visitations from the patient's family, caretakers, or clergy in a similar way that they did prior to the emergency.

If a patient is in terminal condition, then no public health order can prevent reasonable visitation from the patient's immediate family, attorneys, or other individuals who the patient wishes to see.

As Rep. Click mentioned, our goal here is not to open hospital doors with unfettered access to patients without regard for health and safety. We simply wish to draw attention to the fact that companionship plays a huge role in mental and physical health. We don't want there to be hundreds more stories like Shirley and Wilma's. There is some middle ground here. In order to best protect the hospital staff and other patients, hospitals are able to do all of the following:

- Screen visitors for symptoms in the same manner as staff and volunteers
- Prohibit entry to individuals who show symptoms
- Require individuals to visit in the patient's room or in a designated visitor space
- Warn visitors about the risk of disease transmission
- Limit the number of visitors at one time, but not the overall number of visitors
- Require visitors to wear PPE, social distance, and implement other reasonable safety precautions. Hospitals may seek waivers from Director of Health in there is a PPE shortage. The Director of Health is able to review and approve or deny those waivers.

Lastly, hospital visitor policies must provide maximum access to patients by offering weekend and evening visits for individuals who may not otherwise be able to attend the regular visitation hours.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on Substitute House Bill 324 and we would be happy to take any questions.

62ND HOUSE DISTRICT

WARREN COUNTY

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