

Department of Planning and Budget
2020 Special Session I – Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB5144

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Fariss

3. Committee: Committee Referral Pending

4. Title: Board of Health; public health emergency; virtual visitation.

5. Summary: Requires the State Board of Health to promulgate regulations for licensed hospitals, licensed nursing homes, certified nursing facilities, and licensed hospice facilities to require a visitation protocol for public health emergencies related to a communicable disease of public health threat so that each patient or resident is able to receive virtual visits from any person designated by the patient within 72 hours of the visitation request. The bill also makes minor technical updates to Va. Code § 32.1-162.5 to correctly refer to home care organizations and architectural guidelines. This bill contains an emergency enactment clause.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: See item 8.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Indeterminate, see item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: The fiscal impact this bill would have on the Commonwealth cannot be determined at this time. The bill requires that the State Board of Health promulgate regulations requiring hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice facilities to establish visitation protocols during public health emergencies related to a communicable disease of public health threat, such as COVID-19. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) has received 22 complaints in total about the lack of visitation at hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice facilities. While VDH has been able to adequately investigate and inspect the complaints received to date with existing staff and resources, it is unknown if the volume of complaints after passage of this bill would exceed VDH's current capacity. It is possible that this bill may result in the need for additional staff and increased travel expenditures for inspectors traveling to facilities for complaint inspections.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: The Virginia Department of Health.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.