

Department of Planning and Budget

2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB1689

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: Greenhalgh

3. Committee: Health, Welfare and Institutions

4. Title: Patient visitation; visitation from clergy members.

5. Summary: Requires hospitals, nursing homes, and certified nursing facilities to allow patients to receive visits from clergy members during a declared public health emergency related to a communicable disease of public health threat. Under the bill, the hospital, nursing home, or certified nursing facility may require the clergy member to comply with all reasonable health and safety requirements and may restrict visits of a clergy member who fails a health screening measure or tests positive for a communicable disease of public health concern. If the health and safety requirement substantially burdens the clergy member's free exercise of religion, the hospital, nursing home, or certified nursing facility may require compliance only if the requirement furthers a compelling health and safety interest and imposes the least restrictive requirement. The bill provides immunity for hospitals, nursing homes, and certified nursing facilities and their employees and contractors from liability for injury or death due to exposure to a communicable disease of public health concern resulting from or related to such visitation, except in limited circumstances. The bill also allows a person or religious organization to bring a civil action against a hospital, nursing home, or certified nursing facility alleging a violation of such visitation provisions.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Minimal.

8. Fiscal Implications: This legislation would have a minimal fiscal impact on the Virginia Department of Health. Any costs to amend regulations can be handled within existing resources.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: None.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: SB925, introduced by Senator Cosgrove, is a companion bill.