

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2024 SESSION

CHAPTER 190

An Act to amend and reenact § 32.1-45.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to law-enforcement officers; exposure to bodily fluids; petition to the general district court by local attorney for the Commonwealth.

[H 435]

Approved March 28, 2024

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 32.1-45.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 32.1-45.1. Deemed consent to testing and release of test results related to infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses.

A. Whenever any health care provider, or any person employed by or under the direction and control of a health care provider, is directly exposed to body fluids of a patient in a manner that may, according to the then current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transmit human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, the patient whose body fluids were involved in the exposure shall be deemed to have consented to testing for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses. Such patient shall also be deemed to have consented to the release of such test results to the person who was exposed. In other than emergency situations, it shall be the responsibility of the health care provider to inform patients of this provision prior to providing them with health care services which create a risk of such exposure.

B. Whenever any patient is directly exposed to body fluids of a health care provider, or of any person employed by or under the direction and control of a health care provider, in a manner that may, according to the then current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transmit human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, the person whose body fluids were involved in the exposure shall be deemed to have consented to testing for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses. Such person shall also be deemed to have consented to the release of such test results to the patient who was exposed.

C. For the purposes of this section, "health care provider" means any person, facility or agency licensed or certified to provide care or treatment by the Department of Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, Department of Rehabilitative Services, or the Department of Social Services, any person licensed or certified by a health regulatory board within the Department of Health Professions except for the Boards of Funeral Directors and Embalmers and Veterinary Medicine or any person care agency contracting with the Department of Medical Assistance Services.

D. "Health care provider," as defined in subsection C, shall be deemed to include any person who renders emergency care or assistance, without compensation and in good faith, at the scene of an accident, fire, or any life-threatening emergency, or while en route therefrom to any hospital, medical clinic or doctor's office during the period while rendering such emergency care or assistance. The Department of Health shall provide appropriate counseling and opportunity for face-to-face disclosure of any test results to any such person.

E. Whenever any law-enforcement officer, salaried or volunteer firefighter, or salaried or volunteer emergency medical services provider is directly exposed to body fluids of a person in a manner that may, according to the then current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transmit human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, the person whose body fluids were involved in the exposure shall be deemed to have consented to testing for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses. Such person shall also be deemed to have consented to the release of such test results to the person who was exposed. If the person whose body fluids were involved in the exposure is deceased, the decedent's next of kin shall be deemed to have consented to testing of the decedent's blood for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses and release of such test results to the person who was exposed.

F. Whenever a person is directly exposed to the body fluids of a law-enforcement officer, salaried or volunteer firefighter, or salaried or volunteer emergency medical services provider in a manner that may, according to the then current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transmit human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, the person whose body fluids were involved in the exposure shall be deemed to have consented to testing for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses. The law-enforcement officer, salaried or volunteer firefighter, or salaried or volunteer emergency medical services provider shall also be deemed to have consented to the release of such test results to the person who was exposed.

G. For the purposes of this section, "law-enforcement officer" means a person who is both (i) engaged in his public duty at the time of such exposure and (ii) employed by any sheriff's office, any

adult or youth correctional facility, or any state or local law-enforcement agency, or any agency or department under the direction and control of the Commonwealth or any local governing body that employs persons who have law-enforcement authority.

H. Whenever any school board employee is directly exposed to body fluids of any person in a manner that may, according to the then current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transmit human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, the person whose body fluids were involved in the exposure shall be deemed to have consented to testing for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses. Such person shall also be deemed to have consented to the release of such test results to the school board employee who was exposed.

I. Whenever any person is directly exposed to the body fluids of a school board employee in a manner that may, according to the then current guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, transmit human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, the school board employee whose body fluids were involved in the exposure shall be deemed to have consented to testing for infection with human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses. The school board employee shall also be deemed to have consented to the release of such test results to the person.

J. For the purposes of this section, "school board employee" means a person who is both (i) acting in the course of employment at the time of such exposure and (ii) employed by any local school board in the Commonwealth.

K. For purposes of this section, if the person whose blood specimen is sought for testing is a minor, consent for obtaining such specimen shall be obtained from the parent, guardian, or person standing in loco parentis of such minor prior to initiating such testing. If the parent or guardian or person standing in loco parentis withholds such consent, or is not reasonably available, the person potentially exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus or hepatitis B or C viruses, or the employer of such person, may petition the juvenile and domestic relations district court in the county or city where the minor resides or resided, or, in the case of a nonresident, the county or city where the health care provider, law-enforcement agency or school board has its principal office or, in the case of a health care provider rendering emergency care pursuant to subsection D, the county or city where the exposure occurred, for an order requiring the minor to provide a blood specimen or to submit to testing and to disclose the test results in accordance with this section.

L. Except as provided in subsection K, if the person whose blood specimen is sought for testing refuses to provide such specimen, any person identified by this section who was potentially exposed to the human immunodeficiency virus or the hepatitis B or C viruses in the manner described by this section, or the employer of such person, *or the local attorney for the Commonwealth in the county or city in which the exposure occurred if such exposed person is a law-enforcement officer*, may petition, on a form to be provided by the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the general district court of the county or city in which the person whose specimen is sought resides or resided, or, in the case of a nonresident, the county or city where the health care provider, law-enforcement agency or school board has its principal office or, in the case of a health care provider rendering emergency care pursuant to subsection D, the county or city where the exposure occurred, for an order requiring the person to provide a blood specimen or to submit to testing and to disclose the test results in accordance with this section. A hearing on such a petition shall be given precedence on the docket so as to be heard by the court within 48 hours of the filing of the petition, or, if the court is closed during such time period, such petition shall be heard on the next day that the court is in session. A copy of the petition, which shall specify the date and location of the hearing, shall be provided to the person whose specimen is sought. At any hearing before the court, the person whose specimen is sought or his counsel may appear. The court may be advised by the Commissioner or his designee prior to entering any testing order. If the general district court determines that there is probable cause to believe that a person identified by this section has been exposed in the manner prescribed by this section, the court shall issue an order requiring the person whose bodily fluids were involved in the exposure to provide a blood specimen or to submit to testing and to disclose the test results in accordance with this section. If a testing order is issued, both the petitioner and the person from whom the blood specimen is sought shall receive counseling and opportunity for face-to-face disclosure of any test results by a licensed practitioner or trained counselor.

M. Any person who is subject to a testing order may appeal the order of the general district court to the circuit court of the same jurisdiction within 10 days of receiving notice of the order. Any hearing conducted pursuant to this subsection shall be held in camera as soon as practicable. The record shall be sealed. The order of the circuit court shall be final and nonappealable.

N. No specimen obtained pursuant to this section shall be tested for any purpose other than for the purpose provided for in this section, nor shall the specimen or the results of any testing pursuant to this section be used for any purpose in any criminal matter or investigation. Any violation of this subsection shall constitute reversible error in any criminal case in which the specimen or results were used.