

SENATE BILL 2169

By Hensley

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 14 and Title 68, Chapter 11, relative to visitation in hospitals.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 11, Part 2, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) As used in this section:

(1) "COVID-19" means the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and coronavirus disease 2019, commonly referred to as COVID-19, including any variant of SARS-CoV-2 or COVID-19;

(2) "Family member" means a spouse, parent, grandparent, stepmother, stepfather, child, grandchild, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, adopted child, or spouse's parent; and

(3) "Patient representative" means a family member or another individual, chosen by a hospital patient, to act on behalf of the patient in order to support the patient in decision-making; access medical, social, or other personal information for or from the hospital; manage financial matters; or receive notifications.

(b) Notwithstanding another law to the contrary, during a period in which a disaster, emergency, or public health emergency for COVID-19 has been declared, a hospital must allow a resident to have visitors during end-of-life situations and shall not restrict a patient from having at least one (1) patient representative present in the hospital so long as the patient representative:

(1) Provides a negative test for COVID-19 in accordance with the hospital's policy;

(2) Is not exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or another communicable disease;

(3) Agrees to follow all safety protocols established by the hospital, which must be clearly specified in writing and be no more restrictive than protocols applicable to staff of the hospital; and

(4) Would not by their presence in the hospital cause the hospital to violate any federal or state law, rule, or guidance regulating that hospital.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect July 1, 2022, the public welfare requiring it.