**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 44‑7‑65 SO AS TO REQUIRE HEALTH CARE FACILITIES TO ESTABLISH PROTOCOLS ALLOWING A PATIENT TO DESIGNATE AN INDIVIDUAL AS AN AUTHORIZED VISITOR REGARDLESS OF THE BLOOD OR LEGAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE PATIENT TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 7, Title 44 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 44‑7‑65. A health care facility, as defined in Section 44‑7‑130, shall develop a protocol allowing a patient to designate any individual as an authorized visitor, regardless of the blood or legal relationship of the patient to the individual. This protocol also must allow for the acceptance of a notarized hospital visitation authorization designating an individual as an authorized visitor and for the acceptance of such an authorization from the individual designated as an authorized visitor when a patient is incapacitated or otherwise unable to designate an authorized visitor.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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