**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 44‑81‑40, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO RIGHTS OF RESIDENTS OF LONG‑TERM CARE FACILITIES, SO AS TO ADD THE RIGHT OF RESIDENTS TO COMMUNICATE WITH PERSONS BY VIDEOTELEPHONIC OR WEB‑BASED VIDEO COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 44‑81‑40(K) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(K) The legal guardian, family members, and other relatives of each resident must be allowed immediate access to that resident, subject to the resident’s right to deny access or withdraw consent to access at any time. Each resident without unreasonable delay or restrictions must be allowed to associate and communicate privately with persons of the resident’s choice and must be assured freedom and privacy in sending and receiving mail. The right of each resident to associate and communicate privately with persons of the resident’s choice includes the right to communicate by videotelephone or another videotelephonic or web‑based video communication technology, such technology which the facility must make available and easily accessible for private, discretionary use by each resident. The legal guardian, family members, and other relatives of each resident must be allowed to meet in the facility with the legal guardian, family members, and other relatives of other residents to discuss matters related to the facility, so long as the meeting does not disrupt resident care or safety.”

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

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