

# The Salt Lake Tribune

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## Utah hospital infection rates may soon be public

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By Julia Lyon

The Salt Lake Tribune

Published: February 9, 2012 04:44PM

Updated: February 10, 2012 12:01AM

A bill requiring hospitals to publicly disclose their infection rates won unanimous approval from Senate Health and Human Services Committee members Thursday.

“These infections are a very serious problem in our state and nationwide,” said Rep. Jack Draxler, R-Logan, the sponsor of H.B. 55, who noted that fearful residents told him they are postponing medical procedures. “Our constituents are scared of these infections.”

Hospitals are already required to report infection information to the federal government, but the new law would make the data available online through the Utah Department of Health. National data suggests that about 1 in 20 people go home from medical facilities with an acquired infection, Draxler said.

The new law would apply to ambulatory surgical facilities, general acute hospitals, end stage renal disease facilities and specialty hospitals.

Dave Gessel, vice president of the Utah Hospital Association, says his organization supports the bill.

“It’s kind of a win-win in the sense that we are in a world where we need to do more of this transparency,” he said.

But the data needs to be clear, said Jason Cooke with the Utah Health Policy Project.

“We hope and trust that the Department of Health will be very attentive to the issue in making this information available in a form people can understand,” he said. “This is one way to empower those consumers.”

The new law is anticipated to cost \$131,600 annually.

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