OLR Bill Analysis
HB 7282

AN ACT CONCERNING NEWBORN SCREENING FOR SPINAL MUSCULAR ATROPHY.

SUMMARY
Starting January 1, 2020, this bill requires all health care institutions caring for newborn infants to test them for spinal muscular atrophy, unless a parent objects based on religious grounds. It requires the testing to be done as soon as is medically appropriate.

Like existing law that requires these institutions to test newborn infants for cystic fibrosis and critical congenital heart disease, the test for spinal muscular atrophy is not part of the state’s newborn screening program for genetic and metabolic disorders. That program, in addition to screening, directs parents of identified infants to counseling and treatment.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2019

BACKGROUND
Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Spinal muscular atrophy is a genetic disease affecting the part of the nervous system that controls voluntary muscle movement. Specifically, it is a motor neuron disease that involves the loss of nerve cells in the spinal cord that may affect a person’s ability to walk, eat, or breathe, among other things. The earlier the age of onset, the greater the affect the disease has on a person’s motor function.

COMMITTEE ACTION
Public Health Committee

Joint Favorable
Yea 21  Nay 0  (03/22/2019)