

2017 Issue Brief Professional Licensure Compacts

Professional licensure compacts create an expedited licensing process for healthcare providers so they may practice in multiple states. Licensure compacts exist for the multi-state licensing of physicians, registered nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, and physical therapists. The benefit is substantial in a rural state such as North Dakota with multiple border communities. Recruitment of qualified healthcare professionals takes place in an increasingly national market and has been made more difficult in our state because of high workforce demands and a growing population. In addition, the continued development of telemedicine services makes such legislation important as providers work to meet increased demand for services and provide better access to services closer to home.

How does a compact work?

The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, for example, is national model legislation that streamlines the licensing process in multiple states for physicians. Each state must enact it as originally drafted. So far, eighteen states, including neighboring states Minnesota, Montana, and South Dakota have enacted the compact.

The compact establishes a commission to administer licensing of physicians in multiple states which will facilitate more timely exchange of licensing and disciplinary information among states. The commission has two representatives from each participating state's medical board.

The compact continues the requirement for physicians to be licensed in the state where the patient receives care. The compact creates another pathway for licensure, but does not otherwise change a state's existing Medical Practice Act.



The physician licensure compact legislation will facilitate cross-border practice, increasing access to patients in underserved and rural areas.

Why it's good for North Dakota

The compact will allow North Dakota to maintain local control of physicians' licensure and disciplinary actions while expediting licensing for those who wish to practice in multiple states. A physician practicing under an interstate compact is bound to comply with the statutes, rules and regulations of each compact state where he/she chooses to practice.

The expedited compact process will help to ease licensing process duplications. Nationally, 20 percent of physicians have active licenses in two or more states. The need for multi-state licensure will only grow over time with more services provided through telemedicine—providing residents with better access to more highly qualified primary and specialty care physicians closer to home. While making it easier for physicians to obtain licenses to practice in multiple states, the compact strengthens public protection by enhancing the ability of states to share investigative and disciplinary information.

NDHA Position

NDHA supports legislation allowing North Dakota to participate in interstate compacts to expedite the licensing of healthcare professionals.