

Issue Nurse Licensure Compact

Position ASHNHA strongly supports Alaska joining the multi-state nurse licensure compact to reduce barriers to licensure, address nursing workforce shortages, and improve patient care. ASHNHA supports the legislation that would allow participation in the compact ([SB 67](#) and [HB 14](#))

Summary The nurse licensure compact seeks to streamline the licensure and regulation of nurses in Alaska by joining 34 other states to adopt a single nursing license with uniform qualifications and practice expectations that can be used across any member state.

ANALYSIS

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) is an agreement between states that allows nurses to have a single license to practice in any state that is a member of the compact. There are currently 34 states in the compact and an additional ten states have legislation under consideration.

Last year, the State Board of Nursing voted in favor of moving the compact to the Alaska State Legislature for review and consideration. The State Board of Nursing also conducted a survey of Alaska nurses and found widespread support for the NLC.

While the compact failed to advance past committee last session, new legislation has been introduced for the 2021 legislative session. [SB 67](#) and [HB 14](#) Nurse Licensure, Multi-State Compact.

The COVID-19 pandemic offers clear evidence for why Alaska should join the compact. Throughout the pandemic, hospitals and nursing homes have been short staffed and in constant search for nurses. Many sought to secure traveler nurses from the lower 48, and not requiring an Alaska-specific license (i.e. if Alaska was a member of the NLC), could have been appealing to a wider candidate pool.

Moreover, the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development was attempting to mirror the benefits of the NLC through emergency authority granted through the public health disaster emergency declarations. The Department was expressly authorized to:

Grant a license, permit, or certificate on an expedited basis to an individual who holds a corresponding license, permit, or certificate in good standing in another jurisdiction to the extent necessary to respond to the public health disaster emergency[.] SB 241.

Rather than rely on emergency powers in times of extreme stress and uncertainty, Alaska should join 34 other states and join the NLC now to reduce barriers to licensure, address nursing workforce shortages, and improve patient care.

The multi-state nurse licensure compact makes sense for Alaska for many reasons.



Improve Access to Care and Patient Safety

- Help reduce nurse workforce shortages and expands access to nursing services quickly and efficiently, which is essential for the health of many rural and underserved communities.
- Adequate staffing reduces nursing stress and supports stable patient centered care teams.

Telehealth

- Enables Alaska nurses to practice in-person or provide telehealth nursing services to patients located across the country without having to obtain additional licenses.
- Allows nurse educators from Alaska to teach online courses to nursing students in other states.

Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief

- Allows nurses to provide nursing services quickly and easily in Alaska in response to disasters such as pandemics, earthquakes, and mass casualty events.

Military Families

- Allows military spouse nurses to seamlessly continue working without having to obtain a new license each time they relocate.

Cost Effective and Efficient

- Avoids delays to the licensing process and allows nurses to get to work quickly and efficiently.
- Eliminates redundant, duplicative regulatory processes and unnecessary fees.