Interstate Compact for Medical Licensure

WHAT are the issues?
As health care continues to evolve, physicians find it helpful to hold medical licenses in multiple states. This is true especially for physicians who work in multiple offices across state lines. And as medical technology continues to evolve, tools like telemedicine allow physicians to provide effective and efficient patient care to patients who may be in other states—which means that the physician must hold a medical license in that state.

Medical organizations across the nation are working to implement an Interstate Licensing Compact—an optional, alternative pathway for qualified physicians to become licensed in multiple states in an expedited manner. The Federation of State Medical Boards will help states that pass legislation containing the same licensing compact language organize into a commission to process licenses, monitor discipline, etc.

WHY is it important?
The licensure process for a physician who practices in many states can be a significant time and administrative burden. This burden also can make it harder for health care systems to recruit physicians to work for them in border areas; the lag time it can take for the licensure process to be completed in multiple states often causes a physician to choose to work elsewhere rather than wait for licenses to be issued.

Recruiting high-quality physicians to Wisconsin (or keeping physicians in our state) is a constant challenge. A more efficient licensing process can help combat access to care issues.

WHAT can the State Legislature do to help?
The Compact will not be established until it is enacted in at least seven states. If the State Legislature moves the Compact legislation forward this spring, Wisconsin has an opportunity to be one of those initial states that will help establish important rule-making.

Additional Background Information
HOW it works
Physicians can apply for an “expedited license” in a state other than their own without filling out another formal application or providing another set of documents to the other state’s board. If they meet the eligibility requirements specified in the compact, the board in their “principal state” of license can attest to their qualifications, and the second state can license them.

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How it Works – continued

• A full and unrestricted medical license may be issued by a state board that is a member of the Compact.

• For a physician to be eligible to receive expedited licensing the following must apply:
  • No convictions or subject to certain alternatives to conviction by a court for a felony, gross misdemeanor or crime of moral turpitude.
  • No discipline by a medical board.
  • No disciplinary action related to a controlled substances.
  • Not under active investigation by a law enforcement agency or a medical board.
  • Successful completion of an accredited graduate medical education and certification by nationally recognized medical or osteopathic specialty boards.

• An estimated 80 percent of physicians nationwide will meet eligibility requirements.

• The cost of the Compact will be largely covered by compact licensing fees. These fees are only paid by physicians who voluntarily choose to participate—the cost will not be spread among physicians who choose not to participate.

• Authority of medical practice acts, scope of practice and quality of care remain with the state—regardless of participation in the Compact.

Amendment or withdrawal from Compact
• Commission may propose amendments—not effective until enacted into law by unanimous number of states.

• State can withdraw from Compact if state repeals enacting legislation.