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2017 Issue Brief

HB 1337/SB 5221: Physician licensure compact

Support the Physician Licensure Compact

The interstate physician compact speeds up the process for physicians who seek to be licensed in multiple states. Its benefit is substantial in a state such as Washington with major border communities. Recruitment of qualified physicians takes place in an increasingly national market. In addition, the continued development of services delivered through telemedicine makes this legislation important. The compact will help providers working to meet increased demand for outpatient services.

Why it's good for Washington State

The compact will allow Washington State to maintain local control and accountability of physicians' licensure and disciplinary actions.

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.

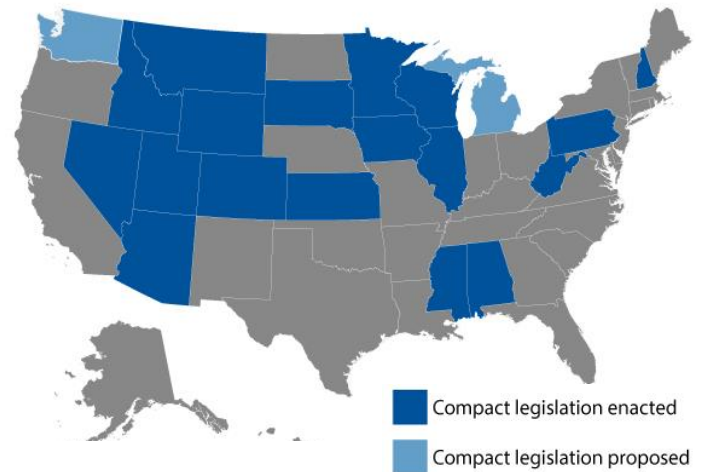
How will the physician compact work?

The physician compact legislation is national model legislation that each state must enact as originally drafted. Eighteen states have agreed to participate.

For participating states, the compact establishes a commission to help administer licensing of physicians in multiple states. The compact facilitates more timely exchange of licensing and disciplinary information among states. The commission will have two representatives from each state medical board participating in the compact.

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

States with interstate medical licensure compacts



The physician licensure compact legislation protects the state's ability to regulate doctors, while at the same time allowing them to serve cross-border communities.

The compact is self-sustaining and funded entirely by licensing fees paid by physicians.

The expedited compact process will help to ease current and future licensing process duplications. Compared with 20 percent nationally, 30 percent of Washington's 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.

WSHA and WSMA position

WSHA supports legislation to allow Washington State to participate in a compact to expedite physician licensure in multiple states.

The compact reduces licensing paperwork, but does not otherwise change a state's existing Medical Practice Act.

"Advances in telemedicine have allowed physicians to deliver care safely and securely across state lines, bringing the care to people who need it. By joining the licensure compact, we make it easier for doctors to obtain the proper licenses to deliver more care to more people safely." - Dr. John Scott, Medical Director, UW Telehealth