

Why should our state join the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC)?

Dramatic changes are occurring in health care delivery. It is common for patients to travel across state lines for health care. Nurses often provide care across state borders both physically and electronically. The single state license model (one license for every state in which the nurse practices) is not economical for nurses or employers. The current system limits mobility of nurses and access to care for patients. In addition, it requires nurse educators that teach online students across the country to hold multiple licenses, slows down health care responses to natural disasters and other emergencies, and imposes unnecessary regulatory burdens on military spouses and their families. The 100-year-old licensure model needs updating and the NLC offers an innovative approach that is safe and in lockstep with 21st century health care.

How does the NLC benefit our state?

- **Access to Care:** Expands access to nursing services across the country quickly and efficiently, which is essential for the health of many rural and underserved communities.
- **Telehealth:** Enables nurses to practice in person or provide telehealth nursing services to patients located across the country without having to obtain additional licenses.
- **Disaster Relief:** Allows nurses to immediately cross state borders and provide vital services in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency, without the need to wait for a declaration of emergency.
- **Military Families:** Allows military spouse nurses to seamlessly continue working without having to obtain a new license each time they relocate.
- **Online Education:** Facilitates online nursing education by reducing educators' need for multiple licenses.
- **Cost Effective:**
 - For Nurses: Nurses do not have to obtain additional nursing licenses, making practicing across state borders affordable and convenient.
 - For Employers: The NLC also removes a burdensome expense for organizations that employ nurses and may share the expenditure of multiple licenses.
- **Greater Efficiency:** Eliminates redundancy, duplicative regulatory processes and unnecessary fees.
- **Flexible Licensure:** Allows nurses who are ineligible for a multistate license to still obtain a single state license based on their state's requirements and statutes.

How does the NLC keep patients safe?

All nurses practicing under a multistate license must meet a minimum set of licensure requirements, including a fingerprint federal criminal background check. These requirements are based on the highest regulatory standards for licensed health care professionals. Nurses who fail to meet these requirements will not be eligible for a multistate license, and multistate privileges will be removed from nurses when disciplinary actions are taken against a home state multistate license.



Who supports the NLC and why?

In a nationwide survey, 70 percent of nurses support their state joining the NLC. The NLC has removed barriers and impediments to borderless practice. State hospital associations and health care facilities in every state support the NLC, as well as numerous nursing organizations. In addition, the NLC is supported by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Military Family Association, the American Telemedicine Association (ATA), and other prominent national and local organizations.

Why is this idea coming forward now?

The NLC is not a new idea. The NLC has been operational and successful for over 18 years and continues to grow each year with the addition of new states. Recently, all state boards of nursing met to add enhancements to the NLC to make it safer and better than ever. These enhancements implemented a set of uniform licensure requirements, so that all states can be confident that new nurses practicing within the NLC have met a set of minimum requirements, regardless of the home state in which they are licensed. In addition, all states that participate in the NLC conduct federal criminal background checks to determine eligibility for a multistate license.

What is the fiscal impact on my state by joining the NLC?

There is a nominal annual fee (currently \$6,000) for NLC membership, though the overall fiscal impact of the NLC is unique and varies from state to state. NCSBN offers states grants of financial assistance to help offset the expense of joining and implementing the NLC. NCSBN is also funding the ongoing operational expenses of the compact governing body, the Interstate Commission of Nurse Licensure Compact Administrators.

Does our state belong to any other compacts like this?

While the NLC was the first interstate compact for a licensed profession, each state is already a member of an average of 25 interstate compacts. The NLC facilitates cross-border practice of nursing whether physically or via telehealth and puts critical systems in place that help keep patients safe. In 2015, the advent of new interstate licensure compacts for other healthcare roles began, including compacts for physicians, emergency medical technicians, psychologists and physical therapists.