

Feb. 21, 2022

Minnesota Senate Building
Chair Paul Utke
Health and Human Services Finance and Policy Committee
95 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN 55103

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Emma Olson, and I am a registered nurse (RN) at Mayo Clinic Health System in Austin where I have the privilege of providing bedside care to adult and pediatric patients. As part of my job, I am a member of the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA). I also support Minnesota's adoption of the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC).

Minnesota nurses, including myself, overwhelmingly support the compact because it offers real benefits for nurses and patients. Health care is changing, and nurses routinely care for patients in multiple states. For Minnesota nurses, this means maintaining multiple licenses—and the corresponding paperwork, fees, background checks, and even possible travel for in-person requirements. If Minnesota were a compact state, Minnesota nurses could enjoy the streamlined licensure processes that nurses in 37 other states already have while ensuring the same high standards of care and practice.

The compact also means opportunity. As telehealth increases, nurses who can work flexibly across multiple states have more choice and economic opportunity than those of us in the few states without the compact. A compact license is an advantage that Minnesota nurses are denied at the expense of their economic and professional opportunity. Refusing to join the compact hurts Minnesota nurses. In addition to limiting our careers, Minnesota's not adopting the compact also makes it harder for Minnesota to attract nurses, who see working in a state without the compact as a disadvantage. This further harms Minnesota nurses because it hinders the state in attracting the workforce we need to support each other to do our best work.

The compact is also important to ensure health care workers can support each other and patients. During times of crisis, it is important that nurses can travel to where fellow nurses and patients most need help without delay. The compact would ensure safe, flexible licensure that protects public health in times of crisis. Even beyond times of crisis, the compact is essential to help nurses care for our patients. Patients are increasingly mobile but still want to be able to rely on their care team. Mayo Clinic, for example, cares for patients from all 50 states. We would not tell a patient to find a new nurse when they go home. And we should not force Minnesota nurses to maintain dozens of licenses to do their jobs. Professional time spent managing paperwork and licensure filings could be better spent caring for our patients. The compact will allow interested nurses to not only continue to meet the needs of their patients, but also provides nurses with the opportunity to expand and further develop their professional skillset.

As you consider whether Minnesota should join the compact, please keep the best interests of nurses and patients in mind. Thank you for the opportunity to express support for the compact, and please consider its adoption this year.

Sincerely,
Emma Olson, R.N.