



March 6, 2024

Dear Chair Wiklund and members of the Senate Health and Human Services Finance Committee,

Minnesota's high professional licensing standards ensure that staff providing care to clients in Minnesota's state-operated services are fully equipped to serve clients that require specialized care. As the exclusive representative of occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech pathologists, professional counselors, and social workers, the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees (MAPE) strongly opposes the numerous licensing compact bills that would allow workers licensed and living in other states to practice in Minnesota without obtaining a new license, thereby circumventing Minnesota's training and other regulatory requirements.

Minnesota's state facilities, including those housing the civilly committed populations at the Forensic Services program, formerly known as the Minnesota Security Hospital, and the Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP), have faced staffing shortages for years. This is not for the lack of available workforce, but rather the lack of recruitment and retention incentives leading to high turnover rates and unsafe working conditions. Furthermore, allowing out-of-state workers to provide some of these services via telemedicine increases the workloads of current employees physically present in the facilities, as they would be required to set up and supervise the appointments, resulting in short staffing of other programs.

Lowering our professional licensing and training standards will likely only exacerbate these issues, as employers will be disincentivized to hire full-time employees who are prepared to provide treatment to patients who require specialized care or pose a significant risk to public safety that they cannot be released into the community without receiving some form of treatment.

Implementing these compacts would only harm patients, Minnesota's professional care staff in state-operated services, and the high-quality programming they provide to the state's most vulnerable populations. The compacts would reduce transparency and oversight of professional licensing standards, taking away the power of the Legislature and professional boards to set and monitor standards in our state. This would make consistent quality patient care impossible because they open the door for lower-skilled workers, creating no guarantee of quality of care for patients.

Ultimately, allowing these compacts is bad for Minnesota, with patients expecting quality care in our state facilities and providers giving that care. Please oppose these compacts so that our professionals can continue to provide the best care to your constituents across the state.

Sincerely,

Megan Dayton  
MAPE Statewide President