



March 4, 2020

Senator David Wilson
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SB 179 – Written Testimony in support of the Nurse Licensure Compact

Chair Wilson and Members of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee:

As the CEO of Alaska Regional Hospital and a nurse, please accept this written testimony in support of Senate Bill 179, the nurse licensure compact. Adoption of SB179 would allow Alaska to join 34 states in the multistate nurse licensure compact (NLC).

Each day I see the impact of nursing shortages on our team of dedicated nurses as well as our patients. I have witnessed tears of frustration during unexpected volume surges. We must navigate decisions regarding divert when our staff can no longer safely handle the volumes.

We greatly value our nurses and the quality care they provide patients every day. We support a healthy work life balance to the greatest extent possible. In the summer months, nurses want time off to enjoy all that Alaska has to offer, spend time with their children, or travel. Alaska experiences a surge of tourists during the summer months which increases the number of patients we serve at Alaska Regional Hospital. We balance the surge of patients and increase in time off requests with travelers. It is difficult to get the number of travelers we need in a timely manner with the current licensure processing timeframes. Travelers also come at a significant cost which impacts the cost of health care in Alaska. Alaska needs a deeper pool and a broader base of qualified nurses to draw from in order to navigate the peaks and valleys of our hospital census.

We want our nurses to be happy, healthy and feel supported so they can do the best job taking care of their patients while they take care of themselves. Nursing burnout is a very real phenomena - all you need to do is google it and you will find thousands of articles speaking to this challenge. With nearly 700 nursing vacancies in 2019, we need more tools to ensure nurses at our hospital and across the state feel supported in their work to care for patients.

Concerns about competency issues and lower bars of performance are unfounded. As noted by presenters at the February 28th hearing of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee, licensure requirements for NLC are more comprehensive than in Alaska. In addition, we have a stringent onboarding process and internal standards and competencies that must be met before a nurse can work on the units at Alaska Regional Hospital.

We have absolutely no intention of using the NLC to leverage nurses into lower salaries or use it competitively against them as suggested by those opposed to the compact. We value the critical role of nurses in patient care and advocating for patients. The NLC would equip us with another tool to ensure appropriate staffing levels, make sure nurses get time off from work to recharge, continue to improve job satisfaction, and help reduce burnout.



Nurses within the compact states have a greater tendency to migrate to where their license covers. This is a strategic advantage for nurses and a huge opportunity for Alaska. The NLC would help us recruit for and fill nursing vacancies in a timelier manner. The current timeframes for licensure are a barrier to bringing on nurses. The NLC is a valuable tool for military families who are stationed to Alaska. We should also ensure all families who relocate to Alaska are able to join the workforce quickly. Alaska Regional Hospital's parent company, HCA Healthcare, is one of the nation's leading providers of healthcare and is comprised of 184 hospitals and employs approximately 94,000 nurses. The vast majority of the 21 states home to a HCA Healthcare facility are a part of the nurse licensure compact. This is a large pool of qualified, caring, and licensed nurses who could relocate to Alaska or assist in the case of an emergency.

I strongly urge you to support SB179.

Sincerely,

Julie Taylor
CEO
Alaska Regional Hospital

Jody Simpson

From: Bodeen, Rachel C <rbodeen@anthc.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 05, 2020 12:47 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; 'mailto:boardofnursing@alaska.gov'
Subject: NLC

To whom it may concern:

I am a nurse that works in Alaska and I support joining the Nurse Licensure Compact bill.

**Thank you,
Rachel Bodeen, RN
ANTHC, Inpatient Pediatrics nurse manager**

Jody Simpson

From: Derr, Lisa M <Imderr@anthc.org>
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2020 11:41 AM
To: Senate Health and Social Services; House Health and Social Services
Cc: Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky; Sen. David Wilson; 'boardofnursing@alaska.gov'
Subject: letter of support for SB 179 and HB 238

This is my submission to support SB 179 and HB 238. I whole heartedly believe that the licensure compact is for the best for patient care and should be enacted in Alaska. Thank you for your time. Lisa Derr

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