



March 23, 2020

Senator John Coghill
Senate Rules Committee Chairman
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Delivered via e-mail: Senate.Rules@akleg.gov

Chair Senator Coghill and Senate Rules Committee Members,

We are living in unprecedented times, and responses to the coronavirus (COVID-19) must be made with unprecedented speed and wide enough to account for a variety of situations. SB 241 is a key part of responding to COVID-19.

Here is what our company, Fresenius Medical Care, is experiencing in Alaska and across the country with the coronavirus.

- In Alaska, on March 13, we have a RN that submitted an expedited licensure request to work in our Juneau facility. We are operating three shifts in our Juneau facility which requires 17 hours of nursing time. At the present time, we have one open position with one permanent nurse and one traveler at the facility. As of today, she is still waiting on her Alaska license. We continue to have 11 RN openings across the state, and this could get to be more of a critical situation if we have nurses that either get COVID-19 or have to be self-quarantined due to possible exposure.
- In a non-Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) state in the lower 48, we have 9 nurses in one city that are currently quarantined for 14 days due to exposure to a COVID-19 positive patient. These nurses work in our acute dialysis facilities located in three different hospitals. We have been scrambling this week to get these positions filled. We are bringing nurses out of education and quality positions who can return to patient care. We have internal traveling nurses who are coming home to fill the positions. Some nurses are applying for an expedited license, but this takes a minimum of 7 days and is only available in several counties and not statewide. This is a large state, and we have over 240 dialysis nurses. Imagine if this were to occur in Alaska where we have such a small number of nurses currently. We have no cushion; we don't even have all of our current positions filled let alone extra nurses that can fill in readily.
- Governors from California, Illinois, and New York, which are non-Compact states, have released executive orders allowing nurses to come from any state and practice without obtaining a state license.
- Michigan's legislature is fast-tracking their Nurse Licensure Compact bill to try to pass it.
- Governors from Florida, Indiana, Maryland, New Jersey, and South Carolina (already NLC states) released executive orders allowing nurses from any state (Compact and non-Compact) to work in their state without obtaining a state license.
- Massachusetts, a non-Compact state, is fast tracking nurse license applications within 24 hours during the coronavirus crisis.



- In Iowa, nurses who may not have a current license but had one within the past 5 years, are being allowed to work without applying for a current license.

These examples show the importance of a myriad of responses currently needed to combat the continued spread and management of COVID-19. We've experienced critical shortages of dialysis nurses in states currently ahead of Alaska in COVID-19 cases. The experience has already shown us what to expect. SB 241 should be passed, and should authorize expedient processes for licensed health care professionals from other jurisdictions to help Alaska.

For these reasons, **we ask for your support of SB 241 and we request an expedited process to get the bill passed and into law as soon as possible.**

Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Wendy Funk Schrag

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