



PeaceHealth
Ketchikan Medical Center

March 4, 2021

Senator David Wilson
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: SB 67 Nurse Licensure Compact

Dear Senator Wilson and members of the Senate HSS Committee,

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center (PHKMC) is an acute care medical center with Long-Term care services. PHKMC is pleased to write this letter in support of SB 67, an Act relating to the licensure of nursing professionals, multistate nurse licensure compact.

PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center strongly supports Alaska joining the multi-state nurse licensure compact (NLC) to reduce barriers to licensure, expand workforce opportunities, address nursing workforce shortages, and improve patient care. Alaska nurses support the NLC. According to a 2019 survey of Alaska-licensed nurses, 92% supported joining the Compact including 87% of Alaska-licensed nurses who are members of a union.

The NLC is an effective tool for recruiting and retention efforts, and a critical resource during times of public health emergency or natural disasters by allowing a nurse to easily cross statelines to help those in need. The NLC helps military spouses who are burdened with applying for a new nursing license each time the family must relocate. Alaska's participation in the compact will increase the ability to hire and deploy qualified nurses in a timely manner, as well expand the economic opportunity for Alaska nurses by allowing them to provide educational services and training to nurses in other compact states. Nurses within compact states tend to migrate to other states covered by their license, participating in the compact offers strategic access to a much-needed workforce resource.

Alaska faces a high vacancy rate for nurses across the state and needs to be competitive to attract professional nursing staff. Filling staff vacancies is imperative to ensure continuity of care and support for patients. The compact has high standards with uniform requirements for a multistate license to ensure that nurses from NLC states meet strict qualifications. In addition to the licensing process, Alaska hospitals and nursing homes are invested in patient safety by having stringent onboarding processes, internal standards and competencies that must be met before work can begin.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Hill Pettus, MSN, RN
Vice President, Patient Care Services
Chief Nursing Officer

Dear Honorable Senators,

My name is Reagan Jennings. I am writing to address SB 67, Multistate Licensure Compact. I moved to the state of Alaska in July 2020 from Virginia due to a military move for my husband. While in the state of Virginia I completed a Licensed Practical Nursing program from ECPI University. After moving up here I learned how difficult it was to try and obtain a license. It is currently March 4, 2021, and I am still unable to practice as a Licensed Practical Nurse. With this bill passing, it means easier access for spouses of military members to practice with their nursing licenses from other states. I hope by the end of April a decision is made, and I am able to serve Alaskans in healthcare.

Thank you for your time,

Reagan Jennings

Feb 27, 2021

Dear members of the Alaska State Legislature:

My name is Megan Farrow, and I am a registered nurse and professor at Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage. We serve nursing students across the state of Alaska. I am writing to request your support of Senate Bill 67 and House Bill 83 establishing the Nurse Licensure Compact.

Currently, it is very difficult to bring nursing professors to Alaska because of the licensure process. As a recent transplant from Georgia, I can attest to the difficulty this created for me. With the NLN, visiting professors could be invited to our campus. Nursing schools from across the lower 48 could participate in cultural immersion courses, giving future nurses a new understanding of Alaskan indigenous culture. The current licensure process creates a barrier in access to our state.

The Nurse Licensure Compact strengthens Alaska's employability of nurses while enhancing the delivery of health care across the state:

- **Streamlines licensure to employment.** In non-compact states, nurses must apply for a license in each state to work. This is a very costly and time-consuming process. There are fees for the license application, license verification, and a criminal background check. Weeks or even months pass before a license is issued.
- **Hospitals and clinics can fill positions quickly.** Under the NLC agreement, nurses can start work in any compact state right away. With the correct qualifications for a position, employers can hire nurses without the costs of delay to fill vacant positions.
- **Rapid deployment of nurses.** As you can imagine, the NLC has been particularly beneficial for travel nurses who no longer need to obtain multiple licenses. It also allows for the rapid deployment of additional health care providers in the event of a disaster.
- **Addresses nursing shortage.** The NLC will contribute to improved service delivery especially in community health services in rural areas like Alaska where there is often a shortage of nurses.
- **Reduces cost for the nurse.** Nursing licenses are costly. Requiring nurses to maintain multiple licenses is a barrier. Alaska nurses overwhelmingly desire the option to hold a multistate license.
- **Benefits through telemedicine.** With the adoption of the NLC in Alaska, registered nurses in one state can assist other states through telemedicine.

This bill is a win-win, maintaining our current licensure options while increasing access to quality health care across Alaska's communities. **This legislation is strongly supported by nurses, health care facilities, and military families throughout Alaska.**

Thank you for moving this bill forward quickly so it can be implemented in our state this January.

Sincerely,

Megan Farrow MSN, RN, SANE

Megan Farrow MSN, RN, SANE

3760 Piper Street
P.O. Box 196604
Anchorage, AK 99508
T: (907) 562 2211
www.providence.org/alaska



March 15, 2021

**The Honorable Senator David Wilson
Chair, Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 121
Juneau AK, 99801**

Re: Providence Supports SB67

Dear Senator Wilson:

As the CEO and the chief nursing officer for Providence Health & Services Alaska, we are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 67, the nurse licensure compact legislation.

Providence has set the standard for modern health care in Alaska for more than 100 years. Today, Providence is the state's leading health care and behavioral health provider and largest private employer with nearly 5,000 caregivers across the state.

One year after the first cases of COVID-19 in Alaska, our state leads the way in vaccinations and has been successful in implementing policies that allowed the health care community to care for the most vulnerable Alaskans. These policies provided hospitals and providers with the flexibility to adapt our standard practices and in some cases, drastically improve access to care for all Alaskans. It makes sense to reflect and make permanent some of these best practices. This legislation is similar to the COVID-19 professional licensing flexibilities implemented during the past year that drastically improved our ability to fill critical workforce shortages.

Nurse licensure compacts provide a streamlined licensing process while addressing critical workforce shortages and improving patient care. Thirty-five states participate in the nurse licensure compact, providing a consistent regulatory framework and a single nursing license with uniform qualification and practice expectations.

Providence serves seven regions across the West Coast and Texas. It is standard for states' professional licensing processes to take eight to ten weeks; in Alaska, it is not unheard of to take 18 weeks or more. This puts Alaska at a significant market disadvantage as nurses and new graduates look at employment opportunities. These are men and women who are looking to continue living in Alaska, military spouses, and those looking to make the Last Frontier their home. They are faced with waiting nearly four months between accepting a position and beginning work. Many cannot accept that delay and choose outside employment.

Multi-state licensure also allows for Alaskans to augment their local care teams with out-of-state providers through telehealth visits, often at lower cost and without the financial and mental stresses of medical travel. We saw how critical this flexibility has been to so many during the pandemic.

This bill removes regulatory red tape while improving patient care and addressing critical workforce shortages. We encourage passage of SB 67 and thank the governor for introducing this critical legislation.

Thank you for your service to Alaska and for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Preston M. Simmons, DSc. FACHE
Chief Executive
Providence Health & Services Alaska



Elizabeth Paxton, MSN, RN, NE-BC
Chief Nursing Officer
Providence Alaska Medical Center

CC:
Gov. Mike Dunleavy
Members of the Senate Health & Social Services Committee

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RECEIVED
3/23/21



March 22, 2021

The State of Alaska
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development
Julie Anderson, Commissioner
550 West Seventh Avenue, Suite 1535
Anchorage, AK 99501

Re: Providence Supports SB67

Dear Commissioner Anderson:

As the Administrator and Nursing Directors for Providence Seward Medical and Care Center, we are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 67, the nurse licensure compact legislation.

Providence has set the standard for modern health care in Alaska for more than 100 years. Today, Providence is the state's leading health care and behavioral health provider and largest private employer with nearly 5,000 caregivers across the state.

One year after the first cases of COVID-19 in Alaska, our state leads the way in vaccinations and has been successful in implementing policies that allowed the health care community to care for the most vulnerable Alaskans. These policies provided hospitals and providers with the flexibility to adapt our standard practices and in some cases, drastically improve access to care for all Alaskans. It makes sense to reflect and make permanent some of these best practices. This legislation is similar to the COVID-19 professional licensing flexibilities implemented during the past year that drastically improved our ability to fill critical workforce shortages.

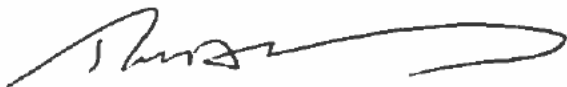
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Multi-state licensure also allows for Alaskans to augment their local care teams with out-of-state providers through tele-health visits, often at lower cost and without the financial and mental stresses of medical travel. We saw how critical this flexibility has been to so many during the pandemic.

This bill removes regulatory red tape while improving patient care and addressing critical workforce shortages. We encourage passage of SB 67 and thank the governor for introducing this critical legislation. Thank you for your service to Alaska and for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Rang, RN, MSN, MHA
CEO/Administrator
Providence Seward Medical & Care Center



Helena Jagielski, RN, MSHCA
Director of Nursing for LTC
Providence Seward Mountain Haven



Heather McKean, RN, MSN
Senior Manager of Patient Care Services
Providence Seward Medical Center

Jody Simpson

From: Bradley Cross [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 8:31 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services
Subject: SB 67

Hello,

I am writing in support of SB67. I am an Optometrist in Alaska, and also a member of our State Board of Optometry Examiners. Mobility across state lines should be easier for health care practitioners including nurses. I have found in my profession that requirements for initial licensure are very similar from state to state.

As an additional note I have heard rumors of the emergency telehealth order being possibly made permanent. Telehealth is very different than in person office visits for most healthcare professionals. I would voice my extreme opposition to that issue. It would undermine Alaskan healthcare providers who have spent years, capital, and dedication to our local populations to be able to care for our patients. Opening up the virtual borders to any provider in the country will cause a failure of many healthcare centered small businesses in Alaska. Please consider these comments when the issue comes up on your agenda.

Thank you for your time,
Bradley Cross OD

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

March 30, 2021

David Wilson
Senator
AK Senate
600 E Railroad Avenue
Wasilla, AK 99654

Dear Senator Wilson,

As a nurse, a constituent, and life-time Alaskan, I am writing to express my support of Senate Bill 67, relating to a Multistate Nurse Licensure Compact.

As a previous travel nurse, I had to familiarize myself with each state's rules and regulations that I wanted to work in. I learned that each state and city had different cultural norms and values. There were inconsistencies between states in education, criminal offenses, and disciplinary actions. One way the states could standardize care is to adopt the Multistate Nursing Licensure Compact. SB 67 would decrease barriers for a nurses by decreasing a nursing license process in other states and it would allow the nurse to practice nursing physically in other compact states or through telenursing. This is an excellent opportunity to decrease barriers to practice and support the nursing profession.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Sue-Sue Scott
[REDACTED]
Wasilla, AK 99654
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Jody Simpson

From: Jj Johnson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, April 07, 2021 8:39 AM
To: Senate Health and Social Services
Subject: SB 67

Hello, I just wanted to send an email in regard to the nursing compact bill that is up for vote in Alaska. I am a nursing student that is getting ready to graduate in June of this year. I live in Colorado and will be taking the licensure test in Colorado after graduation. I have been to Alaska many times and would like to practice there at some point in the near future. I really would like to see the nursing compact bill pass so that I would not have to jump through multiple hoops prior to applying for a job there. I have been to Fairbanks on vacation multiple times and love the area. This bill would make it easier for my girlfriend and I to make a smooth transition and allow more nurses to come to the wonderful state of Alaska!

Thank you,
JJ

Jody Simpson

From: Nancy Sanders [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 04, 2021 3:06 PM
To: Senate Health and Social Services
Subject: SB 67

Chairman Wilson and members of the SHSS Committee,

My name is Nancy Sanders, PhD, RN and I am a former Executive Administrator of the Board of Nursing. In that role, I am familiar with the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). I listened to the committee hearings for SB 67 on 2/23 and 2/25. Many points presented were valid, but I feel additional clarification about the Nurse Licensure Compact is warranted.

When a state adopts the NLC, the state agrees to change its nurse practice act to conform to the NLC. This is a state's rights issue. Director Chambers suggested a parallel administrative structure for the NLC separate from what LPNs and RNs are currently licensed/regulated under. This would include fees and budgetary issues. Besides being cumbersome and confusing, the suggestion creates a dual system of regulation for the same professions.

Director Chambers made the point several times that the NLC had higher standards than Alaska's nurse practice act. I argue that Alaska may have different standards and even higher standards than the states who have adopted the NLC. For example, if a nurse comes to Alaska using a Compact license and violates Alaska's disciplinary regulations, it may not be a violation of the nurse's homestate's regulation. Alaska has to then negotiate with the home state to determine who will investigate and potentially discipline the nurse. This could result in high legal fees that the Alaska Board of Nursing would be responsible for when the nurse is not licensed and has paid no fees in Alaska.

Military spouses need for a license was mentioned several times. My understanding is that duty station changes are announced 3 months in advance which allows military spouses time to apply for licensure prior to arrival in Alaska. Plus, the cost of the license is reimbursed. The Board of Nursing has already worked out processes to allow nurses to obtain their Alaska licenses in a timely manner. Nine months mentioned by Director Chambers is an exaggeration unless there is a problem with the application. Already, nurses who work on a military base or in a federal facility like the VA can legally practice on a license from another state. In addition, and a little off topic, nurses needed in emergencies are given high priority for licensure as well.

Nurses who practice in Alaska because of the NLC can be used as strike breakers. This would be devastating to nurses who currently belong to a union which allows negotiation of wages and working conditions.

I appreciated the Committee members who voiced concern about Alaska's nurses being furloughed or unemployed. The focus on "growing our own" nurses is welcome. Along with the above concern, at issue is specialty practice. There may be vacancies for nurses, but nurses may prefer to practice in other venues because of their specialty.

As you are aware, adoption of the NLC is a complex decision. Thank you for considering these comments. I am available for discussion at drnancy99502@gmail.com or at 907-244-7804. Thank you.

School of Nursing
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Dr
Anchorage, AK 99508

April 9, 2021

Senator David Wilson, Chairman
Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

sent by email to senate.health.and.social.services@akleg.gov

Dear Senator Wilson and Committee members:

Subject: SB67, Multi-state Nurse Licensure Compact

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) for the School of Nursing at UAA is comprised of 12 members from around the State with diverse backgrounds. Most of our members are experienced in health care and several are graduates of the School of Nursing and other UA programs. Our primary function is to advise the Director of the School of Nursing about health care needs in Alaska, help recruit students, and advocate for the School.

We were approached last year by former School Director and Board of Nursing Executive Director Dr. Marianne Murray about supporting legislation for Alaska to join a multi-state compact for registered nursing licensure to assist with traveling. The compact sets standards that are at least as restrictive as Alaska's. When we discussed this during several Board meetings last year there was broad support. No objections were expressed.

Because of COVID disruption part way through the 2020 legislative session, the bill did not move last session. However, we are grateful it has been reintroduced and want you to know that we strongly support this legislation. It may take considerable work to resolve specific issues, and we commend that to you. We will next be meeting as an Advisory Board on Friday, April 16 and plan additional discussion on this bill then. Some of our members may wish to provide their inputs individually.

If Alaska joins the compact with what we understand is 35 other states, perhaps more by now, this will provide greater opportunities for Alaska nurses and will conversely help Alaska meet its health care needs during crises when we might experience shortages of nurses in our State.

Sincerely,



Loren Lemman

Chairman, UAA School of Nursing CAB

cc: Dr. Carla Hagen, Director