



September 9, 2021

Chair Senator Wilson and Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

Fresenius Kidney Care serves 330 patients in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Soldotna, and Wasilla, and we request your support of Senate Bill 67. Currently, we have 9 openings for permanent RN positions, and it takes an average of 75 days for us to fill them. We currently have no permanently based nurse at our Juneau clinic. We have a candidate for that clinic who is waiting on their license. We have had additional nurses who have used the emergency courtesy license; however, the process has taken over two weeks.

Dialysis nursing is a specialized field. Because we are a large company, we rely on the ability to bring dialysis trained nurses in from other states in times of need. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has strict requirements of registered nurses in the dialysis setting that make it difficult to use nurses that do not have experience to help fill in during times of shortages. If nurses give two weeks' notice that they are leaving, a clinic can go from stable staffing to unstable staffing in a very short time. According to a study on nursing shortages, by 2030, Alaska will be the state with the highest percentage of nursing openings, at 23%.*

During Covid-19, the Board of Nursing put in place an emergency temporary nursing license. We appreciate this. For dialysis patients, interruptions and delays in treatment schedules is more than just an inconvenience – it is critical. It is vital that we have a permanent way for dialysis nurses to come from other states immediately during any type of future disaster that may occur.

The Compact has a history of working well. In 2018, the original 26 states passed the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, demonstrating the success of the Compact and their desire to continue to be part of it. Additional states have since joined. In 2020, the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association surveyed 15 compact states and found that concerns such as lost revenue to state Boards of Nursing and public safety concerns had not materialized. They changed their position from opposing the legislation to supporting it.

For these reasons we ask for your support of the Nurse Licensure Compact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Funk Schrag".

Wendy Funk Schrag, LMSW, ACSW
Vice President State Government Affairs
316.841.5245

Wendy.schrag@fmc-na.com

*The States with the Largest Nursing Shortages, RegisteredNursing.org, January 22, 2020.