



The Nurse Licensure Compact: A Bad Fit for Alaska

At first pass, joining the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) might sound like a great idea. But after careful review, the Alaska Nurses Association continues to have numerous concerns and remains strongly opposed to the adoption of the Nurse Licensure Compact in Alaska.

LOSS OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY

Alaskans Know What's Best for Alaskans

Our current system means local experts make local decisions that are right for Alaska. Under the Compact, we'd be handing over important decisions to a private, non-regulatory, non-governmental, out-of-state trade group. The commission in charge of the Compact can adopt rules and assess payments from states... and decisions are binding. That's not what's best for our state.

THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY & HEALTH

Operation Nightingale Identifies 7,600+ Fake Nurses

In January 2023, "Operation Nightingale" unearthed a scheme that sold fraudulent nursing degrees to over 7,600 individuals. Fortunately, because Alaska is not part of the Compact, the Alaska Board of Nursing can take immediate action to bar these individuals from working in our state. Compact states, on the other hand, must wait for other member states to investigate and take action against these individuals – and meanwhile, would have no way of knowing if any fake nurses were working in their state. Alaska has high standards and local enforcement for a reason: to protect the health and safety of Alaskan patients.

LOCAL ISSUES NEED LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Smart Regulation and Innovation Make the Difference

Alaska used to be known as one of the quickest states in nurse licensing – but is currently experiencing delays compounded by short staffing. Joining the Compact wouldn't fix the slowdown in our own backyard. With processing improvements and innovations, investing in our Board of Nursing, and smart local regulation, Alaska can once again claim the top spot in licensing turnaround times.

REVENUE DOWN, LICENSE FEES UP

Who Benefits?

Out-of-state nurses wouldn't have to pay license fees to work in Alaska under the Compact. 47 percent of nurses licensed in Alaska live out-of-state. The loss of revenue would be huge, and Alaskan nurses would shoulder the burden and pay more for their licenses. The only winner here? Deep-pocketed travel nursing corporations that would increase profits at the expense of Alaskans.

WON'T SOLVE WORKFORCE NEEDS

There's No Magic Supply of Extra Nurses

More nurses? Not so fast. There's no evidence to suggest the Compact helps with staffing. The nursing shortage exists nationwide, and joining the Compact will not suddenly nor magically bring a flood of nurses to Alaska to fill vacancies at needy facilities. The real solution? Better work environments are needed to stop the wave of nurses leaving the bedside.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The "One-Size-Fits-All" Nurse Licensure Compact is a Bad Fit for Alaska

We need effective regulatory measures that are workable and realistic, offer real solutions, and respect state sovereignty. The Nurse Licensure Compact just isn't it. We can and must work toward better approaches that put Alaskans first.