

April 11, 2018

Dear HHS Finance Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of HF3848 that will include Minnesota among the 30 states presently participating in the Nurse Licensure Compact. In addition to enabling Minnesota nurses to provide care through technology to patients who live in other states, this bill has important positive implications for hospitals and health systems who employ nurses, particularly for the hospitals and clinics who are located within reasonable driving distance to the state of Minnesota. There are several implications related to Minnesota not participating in the Nurse Licensure Compact that burdens citizens with unnecessary cost and imposes barriers to care, practice and access.

Let me illustrate a couple situations that actually occur with routine frequency. The cost for nurses to hold a RN license in multiple states to be able to work with patients is an unnecessary cost and burden in healthcare. For patient safety and quality, it is imperative that patients have continuity in their care. For hospitals and clinics in Minnesota the current situation with not being in the Nurse Licensure Compact, limits the nurses' ability to follow up with patients. In order to follow up with patients who reside in any state other than Minnesota, the nurse must obtain a license in each state where the patient resides. In addition, if the nurses do not have a license in the residence of the patient there is risk of inadequate care coordination, communication and planning. Every day Sanford medical and nursing staff provide care to patients whose residence is in the border states of North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska. Patients are reaching out to the physician offices on a daily basis asking questions about their health, seeking consultation about the need for immediate treatment, questions about medications and care at home. When these residents have a Minnesota address, it requires doctors and nurses located in the state of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa or Nebraska to obtain a RN license in Minnesota in order to legally provide the patient with answers to the questions they have. The requirement to hold this additional license in Minnesota when the nurse or the doctor might otherwise hold a compact license creates additional cost and unnecessary administrative burden to the health care system, and does not add any additional public protection qualities.

This situation exists because of the failure of the Minnesota legislature to enact this nationally accepted standard with the Nurse Licensure Compact and associated language. In addition, there are situations where due to significant workforce illness or shortage, the potential exists to delay treatment or ask others to work additional hours due to another qualified RN not holding a license in the state of Minnesota.

Thank you for your strong leadership in advancing the Nurse Licensure Compact legislation in Minnesota.

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