



**Date:** September 8, 2017

**To:** Members of the Wisconsin State Legislature

**From:** Wisconsin's Leading Health Care and Nursing Organizations

**Subject:** Co-Sponsor LRB 3932/1 - Maintain Wisconsin's Status as a Nurse Licensure Compact State

Our statewide coalition of health care organizations and nursing associations are pleased to support legislation enacting the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) in Wisconsin – LRB 3932/1 – authored by Reps. VanderMeer, Tranel and Ripp and Sens. Marklein, Cowles and Olsen. **Our coalition asks you to co-sponsor LRB 3932/1, which has received strong support from nurses all over Wisconsin, the health care organizations that employ many of these nurses and the Wisconsin Board of Nursing.** Maintaining Wisconsin's continued participation in the nurse licensure compact will ensure unnecessary additional licensure barriers do not exist for our state's nursing workforce.

Wisconsin was an inaugural member of the Nurse Licensure Compact first implemented in 2000. Since then, nearly every nurse in Wisconsin has been able to receive the benefits of interstate licensure portability. Enactment of this bill will protect the ability for 112,000 Wisconsin nurses to maintain that multistate license. **If the legislature does not act by the end of the year, every nurse currently enjoying the benefits of this interstate license will be forced to apply for an individual state license in Wisconsin and every other state where he or she would like to work – taking up to eight weeks just for a Wisconsin license.**

LRB 3932/1 **PROTECTS** an existing alternative, voluntary and expedited process for a nurse to receive a multistate license and begin providing care to patients in Wisconsin or any of the other 26 compact states (including Iowa). For example, 540 nurses in Wisconsin and Iowa currently live in one state and work in the other. One in 5 nurses at Southwest Health, Platteville's hospital, commute from their homes in Iowa to serve patients in Wisconsin.

The compact's reach, though, extends beyond the Wisconsin – Iowa border; multistate licensure facilitates the ability for nurses to provide services through telemedicine, online education, agency nursing, and disaster relief. As a compact state, Texas is grateful for the many compact state nurses who are able to quickly provide essential hurricane disaster relief with no additional licensure action by the Texas Board of Nursing. In the almost two weeks since Hurricane Harvey hit, Texas had to issue over 600 emergency licenses to non-compact state nurses, an unnecessary regulatory burden during an unprecedented disaster which could have been avoided by compact membership in those states.

And over 100 Wisconsin hospitals reported deploying telemedicine in the recently completed WHA Information Center Annual Survey of Wisconsin hospitals, creating additional access to Wisconsin's world class health care – ranked as the top health care system in the country by the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality.

Finally, with an aging workforce and an aging population, advance practice clinicians – including Advanced Practice Nurses - are in critical demand, with double-digit hospital vacancy rates in Wisconsin. The compact facilitates online degree advancement for nurses wishing to join the primary care provider workforce or wishing to become the educators of our future nursing workforce.

**We ask to you to sign on as a co-sponsor of LRB 3932/1 and work with your colleagues in the legislature to move this bill through the legislative process by the end of the year.**