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5510 Research Park Drive
P.O. Box 259038
Madison, WI 53725-9038
608.274.1820 | FAX 608.274.8554 | www.wha.org

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Health

**FROM: Kyle O'Brien, Senior Vice President Government Relations
Ann Zenk, Vice president Workforce and Clinical Practice**

DATE: July 10, 2019

RE: WHA's Support of AB 70 – Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Reauthorization

On behalf of our 140 hospital members, the Wisconsin Hospital Association (WHA) is pleased to support Assembly Bill 70, the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC) Reauthorization Act. WHA was a strong advocate of the original Compact enabling legislation, which passed the legislature with broad, bipartisan support in 2015. In fact, all the members of this Committee, who were in office at the time, supported the original Compact legislation. WHA appreciated your support then and asks for your support on Assembly Bill 70.

WHA engages with the state legislature, state agencies, our members and their educational partners to increase workforce capacity and address regulatory/licensure issues impacting our health care workforce. For example, WHA has been a lead advocacy partner with the state to create a matching-grant Graduate Medical Education program to create new capacity, especially in rural communities, for physician training. This program has had a tremendous impact on the supply of physicians for hospitals and health systems in Wisconsin, especially in high-demand fields like family medicine and psychiatry.

WHA and our members are acutely aware of the challenges in assuring continued access to Wisconsin's high-quality health care; recruiting and retaining physicians is one of the greatest challenges we face.

Four hundred Wisconsin physicians a year retire. With an educational and training runway to practice of 12-plus years for physicians and a rapidly aging workforce and population, Wisconsin must successfully attract and retain physicians to the health care workforce to ensure access to care. The IMLC provides a valuable advantage to retaining and recruiting physicians for Wisconsin's health care workforce.

Hospitals, health systems and physicians who serve patients in Wisconsin see the value of the IMLC and are increasing their utilization of this expedited licensure process. Utilization of the expedited compact process has more than doubled since Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to utilize the compact in April 2017.

Wisconsin's Medical Examining Board (MEB), the state regulatory body overseeing the licensure and practice of physicians unanimously passed a motion at the MEB's January 16, 2019 board meeting to *"denote its strong support for permanent statutory authorization of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact"*.

Wisconsin's experience as the first state to issue compact licenses, and the growing number of hospitals and physicians who utilize the expedited process, supports the need to continue Wisconsin's participation in this multi-state physician licensure compact.

WHA requests your support of Assembly Bill 70 to ensure Wisconsin physicians, hospitals and patients can continue to benefit from the streamlined licensure process offered through the Compact.