

**Meeting of the North Dakota Health Services Committee
Wednesday July 27, 2016
2:00pm**

**Written Testimony of Colmon Elridge III, Director
The Council of State Governments
National Center for Interstate Compacts**

Good Afternoon.

Thank you to Chairwoman Lee, Vice Chairman Fehr, and the entire membership of the North Dakota Health Services Committee for the invitation for the Council of State Governments to join with you this afternoon to speak to some of the work we have been engaged in, in collaboration with states such as North Dakota, to solve some of America's most challenging problems.

Throughout its 83-year history, The Council of State Governments has been at the forefront of promoting multi-state problem solving and advocating the role of the states in determining their respective futures. CSG has played an integral role in the development of numerous interstate compacts, tracking the progress of over 200 active interstate compacts, researching innovative problem solving solutions for the states and bringing the states together to build consensus on national issues.

The Council of State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts (NCIC), founded in 2005, has been the leading voice for the utilization of interstate compacts and interstate collaboration as a means to address some of America's most pressing issues. The NCIC is proud to have facilitated collaborative agreements between state governments, federal agencies, and the private sector to bring solutions to issues ranging from the education of military children (Military Interstate Children's Compact), the transfer of adult offenders (Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision), and

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the transfer of juvenile offenders (Interstate Compact for Juveniles), which have been adopted by all 50 states, as well as the majority of compacts which are regionally focused.

Over the past few years, the NCIC has partnered with states, health care providers, and other interested parties on license portability and license reciprocity as a means to address the growing number of insured citizens as well as a growing deficit of health care providers. As a result of those initiatives, the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLCC), the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC), the Recognition of EMS Licensure Personnel Licensure Interstate Compact (REPLICA), the Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT), and the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact (PTLC), have been introduced in state legislatures across the nation, and in the case of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, has been activated into commission status.

From advising, education and outreach, legislative enactment, to establishing the administrative agency or commission, the Council of State Governments' Nation Center for Interstate Compacts has been a proud partner in advancing the delivery of health care across the nation and in doing so breaking down barriers to licensure while increasing access to care and strengthening patient and consumer protections.

The compacts listed above and other health care related compacts currently in the developmental process, serve to allow those states that are members of each compact to offer an expedited process for those who wish to be licensed in multiple states to do so. This process does not replace the licensure process of each state; simply it serves as a mechanism for practitioners in good standing, to have an expedited and, in most cases, less expensive avenue to multistate licensure. We are finding that many military spouses, many of whom practice in a health care discipline, are advocating for the passage and enactment of the interstate compact mechanism as a means to find employment

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as their spouses are assigned new orders across our nation. So many illustrate the realities of moving, many having to find new homes, new schools, and the frustration of not being able to find work because of costs, restrictive regulations, and other variables.

In many areas, especially border areas, many of these compacts become economic development tools, allowing practitioners to leave in one state and practice in one or multiple states.

As someone who has had the privilege and responsibility of helping to govern the state of Kentucky, a rural and poor state for eight years, states like mine and indeed all states are facing increasing needs of access for a multitude of populations.

Whether it is the largest aging population in the history of the nation, the large millennial population, the increased mobility of our citizens, the consumer is telling us all that access to care is not where the doctor is but where they are.

With that knowledge and with an estimated physician shortage of 90,000 by the year 2020, more than 96 million Americans living in areas in which there is a shortage of mental health service providers, using tools, such as the interstate compact, many of which include telehealth, seek to close the gap of quality and affordable access, where the patient is.

I have spoken about some of the current health care related compacts currently in the legislative process and so allow me to add some numbers to the story:

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Compact	Number of States
<p style="text-align: center;">Interstate Medical Licensure</p> <p>The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact offers a new, voluntary expedited pathway to licensure for qualified physicians who wish to practice in multiple states, increasing access to health care for patients in underserved or rural areas and allowing them to more easily connect with medical experts through the use of telemedicine technologies. While making it easier for physicians to obtain licenses to practice in multiple states, the Compact strengthens public protection by enhancing the ability of states to share investigative and disciplinary information. The Compact is being implemented in a growing number of states, with others expected to adopt it soon.</p>	17
<p style="text-align: center;">Enhanced Nurse Licensure</p> <p>Nurses have the ability to practice across state lines. Physically and/or electronically - through a streamlined process without additional applications or fees.</p> <p>State boards of nursing reach new levels of cooperation and coordination. The public enjoys access to safe nursing care and are still protected through effective enforcement of licensure laws across state boundaries.</p>	15
<p style="text-align: center;">REPLICA (EMS Officials)</p> <p>REPLICA allows EMS providers to cross state lines with other member states and function at whatever level they are licensed as in their home state. As long as the individual is eighteen years old, holds a valid license, and is operating under the supervision of a medical director, they can “enjoy the privilege to practice in another member state.”</p>	7

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<p style="text-align: center;">REPLICA (EMS Officials) cont.</p> <p>For those EMS personnel who work along a state border and routinely cross the state line, if both states are compact members, then there is no issue with them functioning in either state even though they are only licensed in one. EMS personnel who work for flight or critical care transport programs will not have to hold multiple licensures to transport patients into or out of other compact member states.</p> <p>Finally, fire-based EMS personnel who deploy to wildland incidents in other states will be able to function at their current level enroute to and upon arrival at the wildland fire as long as those states are compact members.</p>	7
<p style="text-align: center;">Physical Therapy Licensure</p> <p>The Physical Therapy Licensure Compact, PTLC, provides for a mutual recognition model of physical therapy licensure (for physical therapists and physical therapist assistants), in which a physical therapist or physical therapist assistant only needs to obtain one license from the home state of residence in order to be permitted to practice in any other state that is a member to the compact, as long as the physical therapist or physical therapist assistant notifies the state and complies with the state practice laws of the state in which the patient is located at the time that care and services are rendered.</p>	4

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PSYPACT (Psychologist)	1
The Psychology Interjurisdictional Compact (PSYPACT) is an interstate compact that facilitates the practice of psychology using telecommunication technologies (telepsychology) and/or temporary in-person, face-to-face psychological practice.	

Again, on behalf of the Council of State Governments and the National Center for Interstate Compacts, thank you for the opportunity to address the committee and to do so remotely. I look forward to addressing you again with more success, more practioners providing care, more consumers in control of their health care outcomes, and because I love your state, I hope to find a reason to testify again, in person.

Again, thank you.

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