



**Ascension**



**Trinity Health**

September 20, 2017

The Honorable Henry Vaupel, Chairman, House Health Policy Committee  
Members, House Health Policy Committee  
Michigan House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Chairman Vaupel and Members of the House Health Policy Committee:

On behalf of Ascension Michigan and Trinity Health we appreciate the opportunity to share our support for HB's 4066 & 4067, legislation providing for the state of Michigan to join the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC). As you know, the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact offers an expedited pathway to licensure for qualified physicians who wish to practice in multiple states increasing access to healthcare for patients in underserved and/or rural areas and allowing them to more easily connect with medical experts through the use of telemedicine technologies. It provides for this expedited process while ensuring the responsibility for licensing and disciplining physicians remains with individual state medical boards.

Adoption of HB's 4066 & 4067, would result in a number of benefits, several of which are referenced above, including: improved access to healthcare, increased physician availability and full utilization of specialty capacity, and a streamlined licensure process that will enhance recruitment of physician talent.

Both Ascension and Trinity Health operate a wide array of inpatient and outpatient locations in multiple states throughout the country; Ascension 2,500 sites of care in 22 states and the District of Columbia (141 hospitals and more than 30 senior care facilities), Trinity Health (93 hospitals and 121 continuing care locations in 22 states). Both health systems have engaged in extensive work in telehealth technologies and protocols and are utilizing this technology within the states in which we each have a significant presence. Currently, this technology is employed around Stroke care, behavioral healthcare services in the Emergency Department, Adult and Pediatric Behavioral health services in the outpatient setting, Pediatric Neurology and Occupational Health among other clinical areas. We are expanding this work into Telecardiology, an expansion of Telebehavioral health, Radiology and other areas.

Access to healthcare for many Michigan residents continues to be an issue in many areas of the state. According to a report by the Citizens Research Council of Michigan, 2015, using HRSA data, only three Michigan counties do not have a Primary Care Physician (PCP) shortage areas in the county, while the vast majority of counties have between 1 and 9 PCP shortage areas. The data also highlights key specialty physician shortages linked to PCP's identifying General



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surgery physicians and Psychiatrists shortages that largely mirror the areas of the state with shortages in Primary Care. The ability of Primary Care Physicians to refer to specialists is one key determinant to their willingness to locate in a geographic area. When specialists are not available the utilization of telehealth to connect a PCP to a specialist can be critical to their locating in a geographic area, providing Primary Care health care services to the population and ensuring that patients have access to both Primary Care and Specialty services.

As noted above, with a broad presence throughout the country both Ascension and Trinity Health have the ability to leverage specialists through telehealth in one geographic area to the benefit of another geographic area in need of accessing those specialists. This can be particularly beneficial in areas like behavioral health where access to psychiatrists is challenging as Michigan continues to experience a shortage of this physician specialty among several others. As your Committee has confirmed through a number of hearings in August and early September throughout the state, individuals with mental health and substance abuse issues face many challenges in accessing needed services. These challenges are further exacerbated by the escalating Opioid epidemic throughout Michigan and other states. In turn, healthcare providers are challenged with providing services to these patients in a timely and appropriate manner and face many obstacles to placing patients seen in our Emergency Departments in the right setting.

Finally, as a result of the streamlined process under the Compact the time required for physicians recruited to begin providing services is significantly shortened. The licensing process can be time consuming and requires knowledge of each state's Medical Board's regulatory process. Under this system for expedited licensure a physician would apply and have their eligibility verified by a member state which will communicate the necessary information to the Interstate Commission. The Commission then facilitates the sharing of all information with those Compact states the physician selects for additional licensure. This can significantly reduce the time for obtaining licensure in a state or states for which the physician has selected for licensure. This can be extremely valuable when recruiting physicians to an area where a need exists and having them practicing as quickly as possible rather than a protracted length of time.

Additionally, the compact establishes a new system of sharing of complaint and investigative information between medical boards and allows for joint investigations. Any disciplinary action on a license issued by a member state may be subject to discipline by other member states. Other member states may impose the same or lesser sanctions on that license or pursue separate disciplinary action based on the respective state's Medical Practice Act. The Compact represents a significant improvement in accessing this information in a timely fashion.



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Thank you for the opportunity to share Ascension Michigan's and Trinity Health's support of HB's 4066 & 4067. We urge your support of this legislation. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,

**Donald D. Bignotti, M.D.**  
Chief Clinical Officer, Ascension Michigan

**Daniel J. Roth, M.D.**  
Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, Trinity Health

cc: Members of the Michigan House Health Policy Committee

## Expanding Access, Protecting Patients: The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact



A new, *expedited* pathway  
to medical licensure

The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact offers a new, 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. Put simply, the Compact makes it easier for physicians to obtain licenses to practice in multiple states. At the same time, the Compact strengthens public protection by enhancing the ability of states to share investigative and disciplinary information. The Compact is being implemented by states across the nation, with others expected to adopt it soon.

### How will the Compact work?

States participating in the Compact will formally agree to adopt common rules and procedures that will streamline medical licensure, thus substantially reducing the time it takes for physicians to obtain multiple state licenses. A Compact Commission will provide oversight and the administration of the Compact, creating and enforcing rules governing its processes. The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact will not supersede a state's autonomy and control over the practice of medicine, nor will it change a state's *Medical Practice Act*. Participating states will retain the authority to issue licenses, investigate complaints, and discipline physicians practicing in their state. The practice of medicine will continue to occur in the state where the patient is located.

### What is driving the need for the Compact?

Among the issues driving the need for the Compact are physician shortages, the influx of millions of new patients into the health care system as a result of the *Affordable Care Act*, and the

growing need to increase access to health care for individuals in underserved or rural communities through the use of telemedicine. Proponents of telemedicine have often cited the time-consuming state-by-state licensure process required for multiple-license holders as a key barrier to telemedicine's growth—the Compact will help overcome this hurdle.

### Who will be eligible to seek licensure through the Compact process?

To be eligible for entry into the Compact process, physicians will have to possess a full and unrestricted license in a Compact member state, be certified (or "grandfathered") in a medical specialty, have no history of being disciplined, penalized or punished by a court, a medical licensing agency or the Drug Enforcement Administration, and meet several other robust requirements. It is estimated that nearly 80% of the physician population licensed in the United States could be eligible for expedited licensure via the Compact.

### How will a physician apply for expedited licensure through the Compact?

An eligible physician will designate a member state as the State of Principal Licensure and select the other member states in which a medical license is desired. Upon receipt of this verification in the additional Compact states, the physician will be granted a separate, full and unrestricted license to practice in each of those states.

### Can a physician that is ineligible for, or does not want to participate in, the Compact still obtain multiple state licenses?

Yes. The Compact is voluntary for both states and physicians. Physicians who cannot or do not want to participate in the expedited licensure process facilitated by the Compact will still be able to seek additional licenses in those states where they desire to practice by applying through that state's traditional and existing licensure processes.

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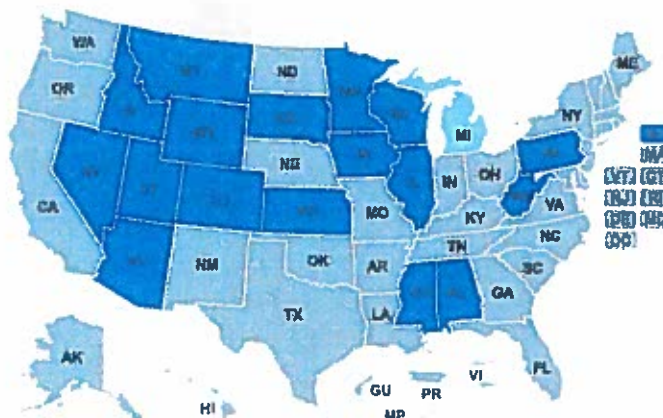
## The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact **Legislative Overview** (As of November 2016)

### Enacted

Alabama  
Arizona  
Colorado  
Idaho  
Illinois  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Minnesota  
Mississippi  
Montana  
Nevada  
New Hampshire  
Pennsylvania  
South Dakota  
Utah  
West Virginia  
Wisconsin  
Wyoming

### Active Legislation

Michigan



### How can a state become a member of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact?

In order for a state to join the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, state legislatures must enact the Compact into state law. In September 2014, state medical and osteopathic medical board representatives, along with other stakeholders, completed the crafting of model legislation for the use of states interested in participating in the Compact. Since 2015, half of the states in the nation have either introduced or enacted the model legislation in their legislative chambers and more than 30 state medical and osteopathic boards have publicly expressed support for the Compact.

### How many states have adopted the Compact?

As of November 2016, eighteen states have enacted the Compact legislation. By surpassing the minimum threshold of seven state enactments, the Compact is now officially established. This year, the Commission will determine the processes, rules and technical infrastructure necessary to facilitate the expedited licensing option available to qualified physicians in Compact member states. Additional Compact legislative introductions and enactments are expected in the future.

### A practical and much needed solution

The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact represents a nationwide solution built upon, and reinforcing, a system of state-based regulation proven to extend health care to the underserved, protect patients and help facilitate telemedicine in the United States. To learn more, please visit [www.licenseportability.org](http://www.licenseportability.org).

### Support is Growing

A growing list of organizations have publicly expressed support for the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. Among them are:

AARP  
Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education  
American Academy of Dermatology  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American College of Physicians  
American Medical Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Well  
Ascension Health  
Avera Health  
Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC  
Council of Medical Specialty Societies  
Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates  
Guinn Center for Policy Priorities  
Gundersen Health System  
Helmsley Charitable Trust Foundation  
InSight Telepsychiatry  
LocumTenens.com  
Mayo Clinic  
National Association Medical Staff Services  
National Board Of Medical Examiners  
National Stroke Association  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
State Hospital Associations  
State Medical Associations  
vRad

***"If the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact were to move forward, it would herald a major reform in medical licensing."***

— Robert Steinbrook, MD, Yale School of Medicine



For more information on The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact go to [licenseportability.org](http://licenseportability.org)