

HOUSE BILL NO. 147

INTRODUCED BY A. WITTICH

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ADOPTING THE NURSE LICENSURE COMPACT; PROVIDING SUPPLEMENTAL PROVISIONS; AND PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Nurse licensure compact -- enactment.** The Nurse Licensure Compact is enacted into law and entered into with all jurisdictions legally joining in the compact, in the form substantially as set forth below.

Article I. Findings and Declaration of Purpose

(1) The party states find that:

(a) the health and safety of the public are affected by the degree of compliance with and the effectiveness of enforcement activities related to state nurse licensure laws;

(b) violations of nurse licensure and other laws regulating the practice of nursing may result in injury or harm to the public;

(c) the expanded mobility of nurses and the use of advanced communication technologies as part of our nation's healthcare delivery system require greater coordination and cooperation among states in the areas of nurse licensure and regulation;

(d) new practice modalities and technology make compliance with individual state nurse licensure laws difficult and complex;

(e) the current system of duplicative licensure for nurses practicing in multiple states is cumbersome and redundant to both nurses and states.

(2) The general purposes of this compact are to:

(a) facilitate the states' responsibility to protect the public's health and safety;

(b) ensure and encourage the cooperation of party states in the areas of nurse licensure and regulation;

(c) facilitate the exchange of information between party states in the areas of nurse regulation, investigation and adverse actions;

(d) promote compliance with the laws governing the practice of nursing in each jurisdiction;



1 (e) invest all party states with the authority to hold a nurse accountable for meeting all state practice laws  
2 in the state in which the patient is located at the time care is rendered through the mutual recognition of party  
3 state licenses.

4 Article II. Definitions

5 As used in this compact:

6 (1) "Adverse action" means a home or remote state action.

7 (2) "Alternative program" means a voluntary, non-disciplinary monitoring program approved by a nurse  
8 licensing board.

9 (3) "Coordinated licensure information system" means an integrated process for collecting, storing, and  
10 sharing information on nurse licensure and enforcement activities related to nurse licensure laws, which is  
11 administered by a non-profit organization composed of and controlled by state nurse licensing boards.

12 (4) "Current significant investigative information" means:

13 (a) investigative information that a licensing board, after a preliminary inquiry that includes notification  
14 and an opportunity for the nurse to respond if required by state law, has reason to believe is not groundless and,  
15 if proved true, would indicate more than a minor infraction; or

16 (b) investigative information that indicates that the nurse represents an immediate threat to public health  
17 and safety regardless of whether the nurse has been notified and had an opportunity to respond.

18 (5) "Home state" means the party state that is the nurse's primary state of residence.

19 (6) "Home state action" means any administrative, civil, equitable or criminal action permitted by the home  
20 state's laws which are imposed on a nurse by the home state's licensing board or other authority including actions  
21 against an individual's license such as: revocation, suspension, probation or any other action which affects a  
22 nurse's authorization to practice.

23 (7) "Licensing board" means a party state's regulatory body responsible for issuing nurse licenses.

24 (8) "Multistate licensure privilege" means current, official authority from a remote state permitting the  
25 practice of nursing as either a registered nurse or a licensed practical/vocational nurse in such party state. All  
26 party states have the authority, in accordance with existing state due process law, to take actions against the  
27 nurse's privilege such as revocation, suspension, probation or any other action that affects a nurse's authorization  
28 to practice.

29 (9) "Nurse" means a registered nurse or licensed practical/vocational nurse, as each party's state practice  
30 laws define those terms.

1 (10) "Party state" means any state that has adopted this compact.

2 (11) "Remote state" means a party state, other than the home state:

3 (a) where the patient is located at the time nursing care is provided; or

4 (b) in the case of the practice of nursing not involving a patient, in such party state where the recipient  
5 of nursing practice is located.

6 (12) "Remote state action" means:

7 (a) any administrative, civil, equitable or criminal action permitted by a remote state's laws which are  
8 imposed on a nurse by the remote state's licensing board or other authority including actions against an  
9 individual's multistate licensure privilege to practice in the remote state; and

10 (b) cease and desist and other injunctive or equitable orders issued by remote states or the licensing  
11 boards thereof.

12 (13) "State" means a state, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia or the  
13 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

14 (14) "State practice laws" means those individual party's state laws and regulations that govern the  
15 practice of nursing, define the scope of nursing practice, and create the methods and grounds for imposing  
16 discipline. "State practice laws" does not include the initial qualifications for licensure or requirements necessary  
17 to obtain and retain a license, except for qualifications or requirements of the home state.

18 Article III. General Provisions and Jurisdiction

19 (1) A license to practice registered nursing issued by a home state to a resident in that state will be  
20 recognized by each party state as authorizing a multistate licensure privilege to practice as a registered nurse  
21 in such party state. A license to practice licensed practical/vocational nursing issued by a home state to a resident  
22 in that state will be recognized by each party state as authorizing a multistate licensure privilege to practice as  
23 a licensed practical/vocational nurse in such party state. In order to obtain or retain a license, an applicant must  
24 meet the home state's qualifications for licensure and license renewal as well as all other applicable state laws.

25 (2) Party states may, in accordance with state due process laws, limit or revoke the multistate licensure  
26 privilege of any nurse to practice in their state and may take any other actions under their applicable state laws  
27 necessary to protect the health and safety of their citizens. If a party state takes such action, it shall promptly  
28 notify the administrator of the coordinated licensure information system. The administrator of the coordinated  
29 licensure information system shall promptly notify the home state of any such actions by remote states.

30 (3) Every nurse practicing in a party state must comply with the state practice laws of the state in which

1 the patient is located at the time care is rendered. In addition, the practice of nursing is not limited to patient care,  
2 but shall include all nursing practice as defined by the state practice laws of a party state. The practice of nursing  
3 will subject a nurse to the jurisdiction of the nurse licensing board and the courts, as well as the laws, in that party  
4 state.

5 (4) This compact does not affect additional requirements imposed by states for advanced practice  
6 registered nursing. However, a multistate licensure privilege to practice registered nursing granted by a party  
7 state shall be recognized by other party states as a license to practice registered nursing if one is required by  
8 state law as a precondition for qualifying for advanced practice registered nurse authorization.

9 (5) Individuals not residing in a party state shall continue to be able to apply for nurse licensure as  
10 provided for under the laws of each party state. However, the license granted to these individuals will not be  
11 recognized as granting the privilege to practice nursing in any other party state unless explicitly agreed to by that  
12 party state.

#### 13 Article IV. Applications for Licensure in a Party State

14 (1) Upon application for a license, the licensing board in a party state shall ascertain, through the  
15 coordinated licensure information system, whether the applicant has ever held, or is the holder of, a license  
16 issued by any other state, whether there are any restrictions on the multistate licensure privilege, and whether  
17 any other adverse action by any state has been taken against the license.

18 (2) A nurse in a party state shall hold licensure in only one party state at a time, issued by the home state.

19 (3) A nurse who intends to change primary state of residence may apply for licensure in the new home  
20 state in advance of such change. However, new licenses will not be issued by a party state until after a nurse  
21 provides evidence of change in primary state of residence satisfactory to the new home state's licensing board.

22 (4) When a nurse changes primary state of residence by:

23 (a) moving between two party states, and obtains a license from the new home state, the license from  
24 the former home state is no longer valid;

25 (b) moving from a non-party state to a party state, and obtains a license from the new home state, the  
26 individual state license issued by the non-party state is not affected and will remain in full force if so provided by  
27 the laws of the non-party state;

28 (c) moving from a party state to a non-party state, the license issued by the prior home state converts  
29 to an individual state license, valid only in the former home state, without the multistate licensure privilege to  
30 practice in other party states.

## 1 Article V. Adverse Actions

2 In addition to the general provisions described in Article III, the following provisions apply:

3 (1) The licensing board of a remote state shall promptly report to the administrator of the coordinated  
4 licensure information system any remote state actions including the factual and legal basis for such action, if  
5 known. The licensing board of a remote state shall also promptly report any significant current investigative  
6 information yet to result in a remote state action. The administrator of the coordinated licensure information  
7 system shall promptly notify the home state of any such reports.

8 (2) The licensing board of a party state shall have the authority to complete any pending investigations  
9 for a nurse who changes primary state of residence during the course of such investigations. It shall also have  
10 the authority to take appropriate action(s), and shall promptly report the conclusions of such investigations to the  
11 administrator of the coordinated licensure information system. The administrator of the coordinated licensure  
12 information system shall promptly notify the new home state of any such actions.

13 (3) A remote state may take adverse action affecting the multistate licensure privilege to practice within  
14 that party state. However, only the home state shall have the power to impose adverse action against the license  
15 issued by the home state.

16 (4) For purposes of imposing adverse action, the licensing board of the home state shall give the same  
17 priority and effect to reported conduct received from a remote state as it would if such conduct had occurred  
18 within the home state. In so doing, it shall apply its own state laws to determine appropriate action.

19 (5) The home state may take adverse action based on the factual findings of the remote state, so long  
20 as each state follows its own procedures for imposing such adverse action.

21 (6) Nothing in this compact shall override a party state's decision that participation in an alternative  
22 program may be used in lieu of licensure action and that such participation shall remain non-public if required by  
23 the party state's laws. Party states must require nurses who enter any alternative programs to agree not to  
24 practice in any other party state during the term of the alternative program without prior authorization from such  
25 other party state.

## 26 Article VI. Additional Authorities Invested in Party State Nurse Licensing Boards

27 Notwithstanding any other powers, party state nurse licensing boards shall have the authority to:

28 (1) if otherwise permitted by state law, recover from the affected nurse the costs of investigations and  
29 disposition of cases resulting from any adverse action taken against that nurse;

30 (2) issue subpoenas for both hearings and investigations which require the attendance and testimony

1 of witnesses, and the production of evidence. Subpoenas issued by a nurse licensing board in a party state for  
2 the attendance and testimony of witnesses, and/or the production of evidence from another party state, shall be  
3 enforced in the latter state by any court of competent jurisdiction, according to the practice and procedure of that  
4 court applicable to subpoenas issued in proceedings pending before it. The issuing authority shall pay any  
5 witness fees, travel expenses, mileage, and other fees required by the service statutes of the state where the  
6 witnesses and/or evidence are located.

7 (3) issue cease and desist orders to limit or revoke a nurse's authority to practice in their state;

8 (4) promulgate uniform rules and regulations as provided for in Article VIII.

9 Article VII. Coordinated Licensure Information System

10 (1) All party states shall participate in a cooperative effort to create a coordinated data base of all licensed  
11 registered nurses and licensed practical/vocational nurses. This system will include information on the licensure  
12 and disciplinary history of each nurse, as contributed by party states, to assist in the coordination of nurse  
13 licensure and enforcement efforts.

14 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all party states' licensing boards shall promptly report  
15 adverse actions, actions against multistate licensure privileges, any current significant investigative information  
16 yet to result in adverse action, denials of applications, and the reasons for such denials, to the coordinated  
17 licensure information system.

18 (3) Current significant investigative information must be transmitted through the coordinated licensure  
19 information system only to party state licensing boards.

20 (4) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all party states' licensing boards contributing information  
21 to the coordinated licensure information system may designate information that may not be shared with non-party  
22 states or disclosed to other entities or individuals without the express permission of the contributing state.

23 (5) Any personally identifiable information obtained by a party state's licensing board from the coordinated  
24 licensure information system may not be shared with non-party states or disclosed to other entities or individuals  
25 except to the extent permitted by the laws of the party state contributing the information.

26 (6) Any information contributed to the coordinated licensure information system that is subsequently  
27 required to be expunged by the laws of the party state contributing that information, shall also be expunged from  
28 the coordinated licensure information system.

29 (7) The compact administrators, acting jointly with each other and in consultation with the administrator  
30 of the coordinated licensure information system, shall formulate necessary and proper procedures for the

1 identification, collection, and exchange of information under this compact.

2 Article VIII. Compact Administration and Interchange of Information

3 (1) The head of the nurse licensing board or a designee of each party state shall be the administrator of  
4 this compact for that state.

5 (2) The compact administrator of each party state shall furnish to the compact administrator of each other  
6 party state any information and documents including, but not limited to, a uniform data set of investigations,  
7 identifying information, licensure data, and disclosable alternative program participation information to facilitate  
8 the administration of this compact.

9 (3) Compact administrators shall have the authority to develop uniform rules to facilitate and coordinate  
10 implementation of this compact. These uniform rules must be adopted by party states, under the authority  
11 invested under Article VI.

12 Article IX. Immunity

13 No party state or the officers or employees or agents of a party state's nurse licensing board who acts  
14 in accordance with the provisions of this compact shall be liable on account of any act or omission in good faith  
15 while engaged in the performance of their duties under this compact. Good faith in this article shall not include  
16 willful misconduct, gross negligence, or recklessness.

17 Article X. Entry into Force, Withdrawal and Amendment

18 (1) This compact shall enter into force and become effective as to any state when it has been enacted  
19 into the laws of that state. Any party state may withdraw from this compact by enacting a statute repealing the  
20 same, but no such withdrawal shall take effect until six months after the withdrawing state has given notice of the  
21 withdrawal to the executive heads of all other party states.

22 (2) No withdrawal shall affect the validity or applicability by the licensing boards of states remaining party  
23 to the compact of any report of adverse action occurring prior to the withdrawal.

24 (3) Nothing contained in this compact must be construed to invalidate or prevent any nurse licensure  
25 agreement or other cooperative arrangement between a party state and a non-party state that is made in  
26 accordance with the other provisions of this compact.

27 (4) This compact may be amended by the party states. No amendment to this compact shall become  
28 effective and binding upon the party states unless and until it is enacted into the laws of all party states.

29 Article XI. Construction and Severability

30 (1) This compact shall be liberally construed so as to effectuate the purposes thereof. The provisions

1 of this compact shall be severable and if any phrase, clause, sentence or provision of this compact is declared  
2 to be contrary to the constitution of any party state or of the United States or the applicability thereof to any  
3 government, agency, person or circumstance is held invalid, the validity of the remainder of this compact and the  
4 applicability thereof to any government, agency, person or circumstance shall not be affected thereby. If this  
5 compact shall be held contrary to the constitution of any state party thereto, the compact shall remain in full force  
6 and effect as to the remaining party states and in full force and effect as to the party state affected as to all  
7 severable matters.

8 (2) In the event party states find a need for settling disputes arising under this compact:

9 (a) The party states may submit the issues in dispute to an arbitration panel which will be comprised of  
10 an individual appointed by the compact administrator in the home state; an individual appointed by the compact  
11 administrator in the remote state(s) involved; and an individual mutually agreed upon by the compact  
12 administrators of all the party states involved in the dispute.

13 (b) The decision of a majority of the arbitrators shall be final and binding.  
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15 **NEW SECTION. Section 2. Supplemental provisions.** (1) A person who is extended the privilege to  
16 practice nursing in this state pursuant to the Nurse Licensure Compact:

17 (a) shall use a title authorized under Title 37, chapter 8, part 4, that is appropriate to the person's  
18 qualifications; and

19 (b) is subject to the same investigatory and disciplinary procedures as a person who is otherwise licensed  
20 to practice nursing under this chapter.

21 (2) The Nurse Licensure Compact is not intended to supersede state labor laws or relieve any employer  
22 from complying with statutory obligations.

23 (3) The executive director provided for in 37-8-204 shall serve as the administrator of the Nurse Licensure  
24 Compact for this state.  
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26 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Codification instruction.** [Sections 1 and 2] are intended to be codified  
27 as an integral part of Title 37, chapter 8, and the provisions of Title 37, chapter 8, apply to [sections 1 and 2].  
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- END -