



## **PONL Position Statement in Support of Pennsylvania Becoming Part of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC)**

The Pennsylvania Organization of Nurse Leaders (PONL) is the state organization for nurse leaders and the voice of nursing leadership in Pennsylvania. PONL represents nurse leaders at all levels – chief nursing officers, directors, managers and others responsible for the delivery of safe, effective patient care. PONL functions as a networking and information vehicle for Pennsylvania nursing leaders and is the state affiliate of the American Organization for Nurse Leaders (AONL).

PONL is fully supportive of Pennsylvania becoming part of the Nurse Licensure Compact and will SUPPORT legislation that is coherent with the *Final Rules of The Interstate Commission of Nurse Licensure Compact Administrators effective January 1, 2021* (National Council of SBN, 2020).

PONL has taken the following positions on the two diverse Nurse Licensure Compact bills introduced in during the 2021-22 Pennsylvania Legislative Session:

- **PONL SUPPORTS [SB115](#) Nurse Licensure Compact Act of 2021** (Sen. Boscola). This legislation was approved by the Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee in March, 2021 and received full Senate approval on May 21, 2021 (vote 32-16), and was referred to Referred to [PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE](#) [House] on May 14, 2021.
- **PONL OPPOSES [HB966](#) Nurse Licensure Compact Act of 2021** (Rep. Kosierowski), **unless it is amended** by removing all sections of the bill pertaining to establishing “Nurse Staff Reports” (~~strikethrough Article XI, Section 5 through Section 10, inclusive~~). Pennsylvania will not be able to join the Nurse Licensure Compact if the NLC Act includes language other than that permitted by the NCSBN.

### **Current Status of Nurse Licensure Compact**

As of March 2021, 35 states belong to the Nurse Licensure Compact. There are twelve additional states, including Pennsylvania, that have pending legislation which needs to be approved before joining the NLC. (National Council of SBN, 2021a & 2021b). The number of states that have become members of the NLC has increased since nursing leaders from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing developed and implemented the Enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) in January 2018 (National Council of SBN, 2021c).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a temporary waiver of nurse licensing requirements allowed nurses who were licensed in other states to be hired in Pennsylvania’s healthcare organizations. Nurse leaders ensured that they were properly trained and able to provide safe and effective patient care. PONL believes that nurse leaders will continue to maintain these high standards if Pennsylvania becomes a Nurse Licensure Compact State.

The Veterans Administration offers federal supremacy for nursing licensure. This means that VA nurses’ specific state license is valid in all 50 US states and territories, including every Veterans Administration hospital and healthcare setting in Pennsylvania (Vice, 2019).

### **How Does the Nurse Licensure Compact Work?**

The NLC functions similarly to state issued driver’s license: it is state-based, nationally recognized, and locally enforced. Multistate licenses are issued by the home state and permit RNs to practice in other compact (aka remote) states. Registered Nurses hold only one multistate license issued by the home state.

The eNLC allows nurses to obtain the multistate license if they meet 11 different requirements that are uniform across all the compact states. Nurses who apply for licensure in NLC states must meet the following uniform licensure requirements (National Council of SBN, 2021c).

1. Meets the requirements for licensure in the home state (state of residency);
2. a. Has graduated from a board-approved education program; or b. Has graduated from an international education program (approved by the authorized accrediting body in the applicable country and verified by an independent credentials review agency);
3. Has passed an English proficiency examination (applies to graduates of an international education program not taught in English or if English is not the individual's native language);
4. Has passed an NCLEX-RN® or NCLEX-PN® Examination or predecessor exam;
5. Is eligible for or holds an active, unencumbered license (i.e., without active discipline);
6. Has submitted to state and federal fingerprint-based criminal background checks;
7. Has not been convicted or found guilty, or has entered into an agreed disposition, of a felony offense under applicable state or federal criminal law;
8. Has no misdemeanor convictions related to the practice of nursing (determined on a case-by-case basis);
9. Is not currently a participant in an alternative program;
10. Is required to self-disclose current participation in an alternative program; and
11. Has a valid United States Social Security number.

In addition, the *Final Rules of The Interstate Commission of Nurse Licensure Compact Administrators (2020)* provides complete details of the rules adopted related to NLC, and reflected in NLC states' legislation.

### **Advantages for Pennsylvania Becoming an NLC State**

By joining the Nurse Licensure Compact, Pennsylvania's registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical/vocational nurses (LPNs/LVNs) will have increased mobility to practice in person and via telehealth in Pennsylvania and in other NLC states.

In addition, licensed nurses from NLC states can be hired to provide patient care without the encumbrance and expense of needing a temporary license waiver to practice.

- Nurses can practice in other NLC states without the time consuming and costly burdens of obtaining individual licenses in each state where they practice.
- Health care organizations can hire and onboard more efficiently/quickly across state boundaries, reducing lengthy wait times
- Hiring organizations can be more competitive
- Nurses who practice telehealth are able to practice nursing in all other NLC states without additional individual RN licenses
- Nurse educators are able to teach using distance/online learning without obtaining multiple individual state licenses
- Professional nurses are able to more swiftly and easily to respond to and provide nursing care in NLC states during disaster situations

### **Summary**

Perpetuating the current non-NLC status in Pennsylvania impedes portability of nurses during a time when adequacy and flexibility is critical to meeting the patient care demand. It also creates a barrier for nurses who cross states to practice. Now is the time for Pennsylvania to step up and join the majority of states in the US as a Nurse Licensure Compact States. NLC will increase access to care while maintaining public protection at the state level that is essential.

**References/Resources**

- House Bill 966 *Nurse Licensure Compact*, Pennsylvania General Assembly Regular Session 2021-22.  
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- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2021a). *Licensure Compacts*. Chicago, IL.  
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- National Council of State Boards of Nursing. (2021c). Uniform licensure requirements for multistate licensure. [https://www.ncsbn.org/NLC\\_URLs.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/NLC_URLs.pdf)
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- Vice, E. (2019). VA hospitals can help nurses manage licensure. *Nova News, NCSBN*.  
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Approved by PONL Board: Nov. 27, 2019; Update approved May 26, 2021