

April 16, 2024

Chair Cutrona, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, my name is Josanne Pagel, appearing today on behalf of the Ohio Association of Physician Assistants (or as we are referred to nationally, Physician Associates). It is my pleasure to provide proponent testimony on S.B. 28, the Physician Assistant Compact Licensing Bill.

I have been a PA in Ohio for over 44 years, having practiced in multiple disciplines of medical and surgical specialties. I recently retired as the Executive Director of PA Services at the Cleveland Clinic Health System where I oversaw the practice, regulation and utilization of over 950 PAs. I am the Governmental affairs Chair for the Ohio Association of PAs and have worked to enhance PA legislation in Ohio and in the US for over 20 years. I am also a Past President of the American Academy of PAs.

First formed in 1978 the OAPA advocates for quality, cost-effective, accessible health care through the physician assistant-physician team approach. Ohio, like other states, faces staffing challenges for healthcare providers. The PA compact is a useful tool to expand the number of advanced practice providers available to patients in Ohio and in other states who participate in the compact. This compact will strengthen access to medical services provided by PAs via the mutual recognition of the Licensee's qualifying license by other compact participating states.

As you may know, this compact is an interstate occupational licensure compact for PAs. Interstate compacts are a constitutionally authorized, legally binding, legislatively enacted contract among participating states. Licensure compacts are administered by a compact commission, an interstate government agency comprised of delegates from compact member states. Licensure compacts also create a licensure data system to improve information sharing between compact member states, including disciplinary information.

States joining the compact agree to recognize a valid, unencumbered license issued by another compact member state via a compact privilege. Licensed PAs utilizing the compact can obtain a privilege in each compact member state where they want to practice. PAs using a compact privilege to practice in another state must adhere to laws and regulations of practice in that state and are under the jurisdiction of the state's regulatory board in which they are practicing.

This compact also adopts the prevailing standard for PA licensure and affirms that the practice and delivery of medical services by the PA occurs where the patient is located at the time of the patient encounter, and therefore requires the PA to be under the jurisdiction of the State Licensing Board where the patient is located.

The PA licensure compact will alleviate burdens for military families by allowing active-duty military personnel and their spouse to obtain a compact privilege based on having an unrestricted license in good standing from a participating state.

Started in 2019, the PA compact is an interstate occupational licensure compact. While Ohio is not among the first seven states to join the compact, it is critical that we pass this bill quickly so Ohio can still play a role in the initial compact commission and the initial administration of the PA compact.

The PA compact is made possible through a partnership with the following organizations:

- Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), a nonprofit association comprised of medical and osteopathic licensing and disciplinary boards of the United States and its territories.
- American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA), the national professional society for PAs.
- National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA), the only certifying organization for PAs in the United States.

The Council of State Governments is providing technical assistance in the development of the compact and its consideration by states.

The PA compact will facilitate licensed PAs to practice in states that join the compact. Rather than obtaining an individual license in each state they want to practice, a PA can utilize the PA compact to apply for compact privileges through a streamlined process. Participation in the PA compact will expand consumer access to highly qualified practitioners and will also facilitate practitioner mobility during public health emergencies.

The PA compact can also make Ohio more competitive in attracting high quality practitioners to relocate to Ohio by reducing a barrier to employment, which should be noted also supports a relocating military spouse.

Similar to other compacts, the PA compact requires a PA practicing in Ohio via compact privileges to adhere to Ohio's existing laws and regulations for PAs. This includes but not limited to: having every physician maintaining a supervision agreement with each PA, and every PA is required to obtain an additional 12 hours of category I CME in pharmacology, above the 100 hours each two years required for certification.

The PA compact does not alter Ohio laws and regulations regarding supervision/collaboration requirements. A PA utilizing compact privileges to practice in Ohio must be supervised by an Ohio physician, or a physician practicing in Ohio through the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. The PA must follow each participating states' laws for practice.

This has many benefits, for PAs, State Regulators and for the States' workforces.

For PAs this compact:

- Facilitates multistate practice by reducing the burden of maintaining multiple licenses.
- Expands employment opportunities into new markets.
- Improves continuity of care when patients or providers relocate.

- Supports relocating military spouses.

For State Regulators this compact:

- Reduces application processing time.
- Facilitates cross state licensure board cooperation on investigations and disputes.
- Enhances public safety through a shared data system.
- Allows states to charge a fee for a compact privilege/license in that state and a fee for renewal of license.
- Preserves the current state-based licensure system.

For States workforce and consumers:

- Promotes workforce development and strengthens labor markets.
- Expands consumer access to highly qualified practitioners.
- Preserves state sovereignty.
- Increases collaboration among states.
- Facilitates practitioner mobility during public health emergencies.

I would like to thank Senator Roegner for bringing forth this important legislation. We look forward to working with you in helping Ohio join the PA compact.

I am available to answer any questions.

Thank you.

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