

April 27, 2021

Chairman Lipps, Vice Chair Holmes, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Ohio House Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 3.

UC Health is an integrated academic health system serving the Greater Cincinnati region. In partnership with the University of Cincinnati, UC Health combines clinical expertise and compassion with research and teaching – offering patients options for even the most complex situations.

UC Health employs about 2,400 nurses who provide care for our patients. As this committee understands, the COVID-19 pandemic placed an enormous strain on hospital staffing levels. Our nurses have and continue to provide around-the-clock care for patients who are suffering from COVID-19 and other illnesses. House Bill 197 of the previous General Assembly temporarily alleviated the concerns of a shortage in nurse staffing abilities by permitting hospitals to hire nurses under provisional licenses. UC Health took advantage of this opportunity so we could continue to care for patients. However, this is not a permanent solution to long-term staffing challenges. SB 3 would allow Ohio hospitals to hire nurses who have obtained a multistate license by removing administrative barriers that currently impede out-of-state nurses from caring for Ohioans, while still ensuring safety for our patients through the multistate license application and approval process. The Nurse Licensure Compact would allow registered nurses and licensed practical/vocational nurses to apply for a multistate license from their home state to practice in other compact states. Nurses who obtain a multistate license must follow all state laws regarding the practice of nursing within the state they provide health care services. These nurses also fall under the jurisdiction of that state's nursing board.

Additionally, SB 3 would greatly expand health care access to our patients by permitting UC Health nurses to treat out-of-state patients via telehealth. Given our hospital's location, UC Health serves many patients who reside outside Ohio. If SB 3 is enacted, our nurses could provide these lifesaving clinical services to patients, greatly increasing health care access by eliminating administrative barriers.

The Nurse Licensure Compact includes many protective provisions when approving multistate licenses. Included in these protections is the requirement that the multistate license be immediately deactivated if the home state takes any adverse action against a nurse. SB 3 also permits the states where the nurse is practicing, but is not the nurse's home state, to revoke or suspend the nurses' license. This action must then be reported to the coordinated licensure information system. By establishing a centralized mechanism to track disciplinary action placed upon nurses, the nursing board will have access to all pertinent information needed to provide Ohio nursing oversight.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 3. Please contact me at any time if I can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Bokovitz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Beverly Bokovitz, DNP, RN, NEA-BC  
Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive