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## **Sponsor Testimony**

Senate Bill 28

Ohio House Health Provider Services Committee

April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Chair Cutrona, Vice-Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and Members of the House Health Provider Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 28, which would add Ohio to the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact. Senate Bill 28 was reported by the Senate Health Committee 6-0, and passed the Senate by a unanimous 30-0 vote.

The Physician Assistant Licensure Compact (“the Compact”) is an interstate licensure compact which seeks to “enhance the portability of a license to practice as a PA while safeguarding the safety of patients.”<sup>1</sup> An interstate licensure compact is a legally binding, legislatively enacted contract among participating states.<sup>2</sup>

States joining a licensure compact agree to recognize a valid, unencumbered license issued by another compact member state via a “compact privilege”. Licensed physician assistants will be able to apply for this compact privilege through a streamlined process, rather than having to obtain an individual license in every state in which they want to practice. This privilege authorizes physician assistants to provide medical services, including telehealth, and other licensed activity to a patient located in a particular member state just as if they were a regular licensee in that state.<sup>3</sup> The compact does not change the supervision of care arrangement or scope of practice, and physician assistants will still have to operate under the supervision of a primary physician.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to note that Ohio does not lose regulatory authority by joining the compact – PAs using compact privileges to practice outside their home 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.”<sup>5</sup> Additionally, PAs who wish to practice in Ohio will still be required to complete continuing education for the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants.<sup>6</sup> For some states and providers, this is a new requirement that will stand lieu of their current continuing education requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Lines 16-18 of SB28

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pacompact.org/#compact>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pacompact.org/about-pa-licensure-compact/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/physician-assistants.htm#tab-2>

<sup>5</sup> Lines 221-223 of SB28

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nccpa.net/maintain-certification/continuing-medical-education/>

From spelling out continuing education requirements to enforcement actions, every detail was looked at during the exhaustive model language's two-year drafting effort. The working group which developed this language included the Department of Defense, industry professionals, the Council of State Governments, and many PAs themselves. The language has since been endorsed by the American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA), the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB), and the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants (NCCPA).<sup>7</sup>

As many licensure compacts for other professions have prescribed, this Compact language stipulates that a governing commission is to be formed after seven states have enacted enabling legislation. These first seven states to enact legislation (Washington, Utah, Nebraska, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Virginia, and Delaware) are locked in and ten more (Colorado, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Michigan, Tennessee, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Rhode Island) are working on legislation in addition to Ohio.

While Ohio missed getting one of the first seven spots, that is no reason for dissuasion – the Compact allows for Ohio, and a majority of participating states, to revise the Compact's language if member states find a compact provision to be more burdensome than helpful to its founding purposes. Experience dictates that it takes about two years after the inaugural commission meeting before compact privileges begin being granted. Since states join the commission as they enact enabling legislation and there has yet to be an inaugural commission meeting,<sup>8</sup> there is still time.

Whether or not Ohio has a seat on the commission prior to it granting compact privileges, the passage of Senate Bill 28 will be beneficial for the nearly 5,000 PAs in Ohio.<sup>9</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that in 2026 there will 10,600 openings nationally for PAs, with 290 of those being in the Buckeye State.<sup>10</sup> Joining the Compact will help fill these jobs and potentially prevent new healthcare deserts from forming.

In closing, the passage of Senate Bill 28 will allow for increased license portability by significantly decreasing the administrative burden of securing licensure in multiple states. In addition, the Compact will alleviate burdens for military families by allowing active-duty military personnel and their spouses to obtain a compact privilege as they change duty stations. It will not only expand patient access to medical professionals, but also our many fantastic healthcare facilities access to the top staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

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<sup>7</sup> This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of funding for grant #H1MRH24097.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.pacompact.org/about-pa-licensure-compact/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://healthcaredegreeseearch.com/careers/physician-assistants/ohio-us/> ; taken from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.