



December 17, 2024

Proponent Testimony (In Person)

RE: Ohio House Health Provider Services Committee Hearing RE: SB 211 – Dietitian Licensure Compact

From: Kay Mavko, MS, RDN, LD, Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Chairman Swearingen, Vice Chair Gross, Ranking Member Somani, and members of the House Health Providers Services Committee, I am appearing before you today on behalf of the Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (OAND) as a Proponent of SB 211 - Dietitian Licensure Compact bill. Senator Kristina Roegner is the bill sponsor, and we sincerely thank her for her leadership.

As a professional association, OAND advocates for issues that support the Dietitian workforce and that protect and enhance nutritional health and well-being. We believe that authorizing Ohio to participate in the Dietitian Licensure Compact as proposed SB 211 will:

- Provide licensed dietitians with opportunities for multistate practice,
- Ease mobility for individuals who are relocating (especially Military families),
- Improve public safety,
- Expand consumer access to highly qualified practitioners and
- Promote workforce development by reducing unnecessary licensure burdens.

The Ohio Legislature has recognized the benefits that Licensure Compacts can provide as demonstrated by enactment of compact legislation for other Ohio health professionals including Physicians, Nurses, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Counselors, etc. We hope that the House Health Provider Services Committee will help dietitians participate in those same benefits.

The Dietitian Compact model proposed in Ohio SB211 was created through a collaborative agreement between the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the Department of Defense, and the Counsel of State Governments National Center for Interstate Licensure Compacts. An advisory group of stakeholders including dietitians, legislators, regulatory boards, and educators met for over 18 months to craft a compact model that will work for our profession. Senator Roegner, her Legislative Aide Ryan Culross and four Ohio dietitians participated in the advisory group and shared their expertise.

The Dietitian Compact will enable dietitians who hold an unencumbered license in a participating home state to apply for compact privileges to practice in other member states - rather than needing to get an individual license in every state where they want to practice.

The Dietitian Compact requires that Compact member states agree to mutually recognize both the home state license and compact privileges issued by member states. This arrangement ensures that dietitians follow the laws and rules of the home state where they are licensed, and in each state where they practice using compact privileges. The State Medical Board of Ohio will maintain jurisdiction over all dietitians practicing within our state borders and will continue to protect public health and safety according to the existing regulatory structure.

All states seeking to join the Dietitian Compact must require applicant background checks, and also adhere to defined eligibility standards for dietitian education, preprofessional experience, examinations, and continuing education. Ohio already has these requirements in our licensure law. The Dietitian Compact does not change any eligibility requirements for licensure that are in force in Ohio. All other states that license or certify dietitian practice and meet these same standards are eligible to join the Dietitian Compact. States that do not regulate dietitians are ineligible to join.

Like other occupational licensing compacts, the Dietitian Compact will be administered by a commission that includes one delegate from each of the member states. Ohio's delegate will be a representative from the State Medical Board of Ohio. The Compact Commission will begin operations when seven states have enacted Compact legislation.

In January Ohio was the first of ten states in the U.S. to introduce Dietitian Compact legislation. SB211 was assigned to the Senate Health committee for consideration and 5 hearings were held. Ten proponents submitted written testimony and 4 testified in person. There was no opposition to the bill. On May 26, 2024, the bill was reported out of committee (7-0) and passed on the floor of the Senate (27-1).

Nebraska, Alabama and Tennessee have already passed bills identical to SB 211 and are now the first states eligible to join the Compact Commission. We are very anxious for Ohio to enact this bill before the end of the current legislative session so Ohio can have a seat at the table when the Compact Commission starts to establish operational rules, set fees, and create bylaws.

Each Compact member state can charge a fee for compact privileges issued, and the Compact Commission also charges a fee for issuing each compact privilege. Both fees will be established in a manner that encourages participation in the compact and provides adequate income for Compact operations. There will be some additional costs associated with development of an interstate data system, and travel for Ohio's delegate to attend annual Compact Commission meetings. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has indicated that they will assist with funding the Compact data system. So overall, the costs for Ohio to participate should be minimal.

The Ohio Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics respectfully requests that you support Ohio's participation in the Dietitian Compact by approving SB 211 - The Dietitian Licensure Compact legislation that is before this committee.

I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to appear before the committee today and will gladly answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

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