



National Center for Interstate Compacts

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Written Testimony on SB 40

Senate Health Committee Hearing on SB 40 – Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

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Position: Other Interested Party

Chair Huffman and members of the committee, I would like to express my appreciation for your consideration of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact. My name is Matt Shafer with The Council of State Governments. My testimony is meant to provide background educational information on the compact.

There are approximately 425,000 licensed dentists and dental hygienists in the United States. Despite the high demand for oral health services, licensees are currently limited to providing services within state borders. The Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact seeks to provide licensees with opportunities for multistate practice, support relocating practitioners, and foster workforce development by reducing unnecessary licensure burdens.

The Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact is an occupational licensing interstate compact. Interstate compacts are legally binding agreements among states. The compact was created through a cooperative agreement between the Department of Defense and The Council of State Governments. For the past 18 months, CSG has been developing the compact language with stakeholders within these professions from the American Dental Association, American Dental Hygiene Association, state regulatory boards, the education community, and others.

The Compact will enable dentists and dental hygienists to get a compact privilege to practice in other states that join the compact, rather than get an individual license in every state in which they want to practice. Like the compact for a driver's license, each compact member state agrees to mutually recognize the practitioner licenses issued by every other member state.

The Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact is similar in form and function to the seven occupational licensing compacts that Ohio is already a member of. A dentist or dental hygienist must hold an active, unencumbered license in a compact member state to be eligible to apply for a compact privilege. Practitioners must also pass a background check and meet other eligibility requirements related to education and examinations.



The Dentistry and Dental Hygiene Compact also benefits military families. If a military family gets assigned to a new duty station in a compact member state, the service member or their spouse can continue to work with their current compact privilege. If the family gets assigned to a new duty station that is not in a compact member state, the service member or their spouse do not lose access to the compact but would need to get a single-state license in their new state if they wish to continue working in that state.

From a regulatory perspective, the Compact preserves the authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. A licensee practicing under a compact privilege must abide by the laws, regulations and rules for that govern the practice of dentistry or dental hygiene in the state in which they are located. The Ohio Board of Dentistry has jurisdiction over anyone practicing in Ohio under a compact privilege.

Ohio will be able to charge a fee for the compact privilege.

Like all of the other occupational licensing compacts, the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact will be governed by a commission made up of the member states. The delegate will be a representative from the Ohio Board of Dentistry.

The compact will come into effect once it's enacted by seven states. The compact is brand new so there are currently no states who have enacted the compact. However, there are several states with introduced legislation this session. If enacted, Ohio would have a seat at the table with the compact commission has its first meeting to establish the compact's rules and bylaws.

We don't anticipate substantial additional costs for states participating in the compact. There may be a cost for additional software required to connect to the compact's interstate licensure data system as well as cost(s) associated with the attendance of your state's chosen commissioner to the annual Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact Commission meeting once the compact is enacted in seven states.ios.oh

Overall, the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact will increase license portability for dental professionals in Ohio, support military families, and improve access to oral health services for Ohio residents, while maintaining the current system of state licensure. Additionally, by ensuring the sharing of investigative and disciplinary information among participating states, the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact will allow participating state regulatory entities to better protect the public. I understand that increasing access to healthcare is a key issue facing states, and we believe the compact provides one solution that help alleviate that problem.