

Proponent Testimony (In Person)

April 24, 2024

Ohio Senate Health Committee

RE: SB 211 Dietitian Licensure Compact

April 10, 2024

Marcy Cook, RDN, LD

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To: Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Marcy Cook and I am a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. I have been a Licensed Dietitian in the State of Ohio since 1998. I have worked in various aspects of dietetics, but most of my career has been in consulting and post-acute care. As a constituent working in the healthcare industry, I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 211 Dietitian Licensure Compact.

SB 211 would allow an ease for licensed dietitians to provide services to a wide variety of those in need of basic nutrition education, particularly in the current state of a deficiency of healthcare workers. There is a decreased workforce pool of dietitians, and this shortage is anticipated to grow with recent increased educational requirements. This will result in further decreased access to health care services by dietitians. Medical nutrition therapy provided by dietitians is proven to reduce health care burdens through the nutrition management of acute and chronic disease and overall improved health status.

My employer, Dietary Solutions, provides direct nutrition education to senior citizens through the Older Americans Act Federal program. This program benefits older Americans with an overall lack of access to good nutrition and health services. The dietitians must become licensed in the individual state where the services are provided. This potentially could result in a delay of services while waiting for licensure approval. It is also a burden on the individual provider to manage the individual state requirements. SB 211 would alleviate much of this burden, which would attract more dietitians to provide these much-needed nutrition services among participating states. The benefits of SB 211 would also be two-fold by allowing dietitians in other states that participate in compact licensure to provide similar services to Ohioans. The result would promote workforce development and strengthen labor markets.

Public safety would be enhanced by SB 211, as participating dietitians would have completed an accredited education program, successful completion of the Registered Dietitian examination, meet any jurisprudence requirements, pass a background check, and pay any required fees. Public protection has always been a priority in Ohio with enacted dietetics licensure laws.

Finally, passage of SB 211 would expand consumer access to highly qualified practitioners. Medical nutrition therapy services provided by dietitians specializing in acute care, skilled nursing, extended care, and residential care settings would aid in the continuity of care, as patients transition to different health care settings, even across state lines.

Thank you again for this opportunity. I ask that you take my testimony into consideration and support SB 211.