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**Proponent Testimony, Ohio Senate Bill 341 (SB 341)
Ohio Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee
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Chairman Burke, Vice-Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Antonio and the members of the Senate Health, Human Services and Medicaid Committee, my name is Christine Young, and I am the Chief Nursing Officer at Akron Children's Hospital, where I have served since 2012. Thank you for the opportunity to express our hospital's support and submit proponent testimony for Ohio Senate Bill 341 (SB 341). I would also like to express the appreciation of Akron Children's Hospital to Senator Kristina Roegner, a member of this committee, for her time, effort and thoughtfulness in drafting this legislation.

Akron Children's Hospital is committed to ensuring that all of our providers, including all of our nurses, are able to provide safe and effective health care services to the patients and families we are privileged to serve. Further, the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), through the Magnet Recognition Program, has distinguished Akron Children's with Magnet status for our commitment to nursing excellence and outstanding performance by the entire organization. Less than 7% of U.S. health care organizations (including only 37 children's hospitals) have achieved Magnet status, and we are proud that Akron Children's has received continued designation as a Magnet organization in 2007, 2012 and 2016.

While providing care in our communities, we know it is crucial for nurses to be able to comply with state licensure laws that cross state lines. The provision of care to patients in states where the nurse is not licensed poses potential legal concerns regarding the nurse's unlicensed practice in those states. Nurses are faced with a decision to either treat a patient in a state where they are not licensed or to decline providing care to that patient, often after a nurse/patient relationship has been established. This raises potential ethical dilemmas between meeting the need to provide care for a patient and the need to comply with state licensure regulations, which place the nurse, patient and health care organization at risk. This situation occurs frequently as a result of nurses who provide telehealth care, home health, long-distance monitoring of patients, hospital follow-up care and also due to the increased mobility of the nursing workforce across state lines.

As outlined in SB 341, the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (eNLC) allows registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical/vocational nurses (LPN/VNs) to have one multistate license in their primary state of residence and to practice in other compact states, while being subject to each state's practice laws and discipline. Participation in the eNLC facilitates the safe, effective delivery of health care by nurses while reducing the risks of practicing in states where they are not licensed. Further, in catastrophic situations, the ability to quickly mobilize emergency nursing staff is essential. Having expedited access to licensed, qualified and competent nurses that are guaranteed through the eNLC is imperative during these times of crisis. Currently, Ohio is nearly surrounded by states participating in the eNLC. Kentucky, West Virginia and Indiana joined the compact, while Pennsylvania and Michigan have introduced legislation to join the compact.

Amid the current coronavirus pandemic, providers are expanding access to care by increasing telehealth technology usage. Nurses are available 24 hours a day to handle telephone coverage, and without endorsement of multistate nursing licensure, the intended use of telehealth services may be limited, which could negatively impact access to care. As one of the largest pediatric health care delivery systems in Ohio, Akron Children's Hospital has expanded to regions with limited resources in pediatric expertise, and the boundaries where we provide care continue to expand to states outside of Ohio. The nurse compact will support the provision of nursing care to all patients, regardless of the state in which they reside and allow for this to be done efficiently without requiring nurses to hold and maintain multiple nursing licenses.

Thank you for the opportunity to share Akron Children's perspective. I respectfully request that this committee favorably report Ohio Senate Bill 341.