

**Statement
of the
Ohio State Medical Association
to the
House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee**

**Proponent Testimony
SB 6 – Medical Licensure Compact**

Presented by Joe Rosato, Director, Government Relations

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Chair Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, my name is Joe Rosato and I am here to testify today on behalf of the Ohio State Medical Association (OSMA), the state's oldest and largest professional organization representing Ohio physicians, medical residents, and medical students. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 6, which would add Ohio to the list of 29 other states who have already passed a bill in their own state legislatures allowing their state to enter into the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC). Notably, our border states of Michigan, Kentucky, and West Virginia are among those which have already joined the Compact.

The overall purpose of the IMLC is to create an easier and more efficient pathway for physicians who wish to obtain license to practice medicine in multiple states. Our state has an existing process to obtain an expedited medical license, however if you are an Ohio physician attempting to obtain licensure in another state, that process might not be as streamlined as it is here in Ohio. The Compact gives physicians who wish to practice in multiple states a means to apply for licensure through the IMLC rather than apply to each state individually, therefore making the overall process of gaining a license in multiple states more streamlined.

It is important to emphasize that even through use of the Compact, medical licenses are still issued by each individual state's medical board. In fact, all states, whether they have joined the Compact or not, continue to maintain full control in regulating their license holders. The Compact itself or other states participating in it have zero control or bearing upon Ohio's existing medical licensure application process.

Even if a state joins the IMLC, it is completely voluntary for physicians to utilize. A physician seeking only to be licensed in Ohio could continue to apply for licensure in the usual way outside of the Compact with no changes, and even if the physician decided to become licensed in multiple states, they can still choose to do so directly through each state without using the Compact.

The Compact establishes a minimum set of standards that allow physicians who meet those standards to obtain licenses through the states' medical boards by applying through the Compact. Physicians applying

through the Compact still have individual licenses through each state, giving the medical boards in each state still have full authority to regulate them as they see fit. If this legislation were to pass and be enacted in Ohio, Ohio will still have full authority to investigate or discipline physicians licensed in Ohio. If physicians are licensed under the Compact in multiple states, all the states where the physicians holds license would be notified and each state would state would have their own due process.

The IMLC was designed, in part, to facilitate growth in telemedicine utilization in a way that preserved regulation of the practice of medicine by individual states. OSMA is a strong advocate for telehealth access, particularly as a means to expand health care delivery to underserved patient populations. Over the course of the past year, we saw how the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly accelerated growth in use of telehealth services across the country, and also created areas of critical need in certain hotspots as the virus spread throughout certain cities or regions.

OSMA believes that with time, the Compact's structure has shown itself to work as intended in those states already participating. Our association supports this legislation as Ohio being a part of the IMLC will give our physicians increased opportunity to assist patients in need, while remaining the current standard of care under the oversight of our state regulatory bodies.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on SB 6, and as always, we are grateful for the opportunity to be a meaningful contributor to the legislative process. Please feel free to reach out to us should you have any questions or wish to discuss further.