



Senate Bill 6 – Proponent Testimony
House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee
Steven Shook, MD, MBA
Lead for Virtual Health, Cleveland Clinic
May 20, 2021

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Liston and members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 6, which would permit Ohio to enter the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. My name is Dr. Steven Shook and I am Lead for Virtual Health at Cleveland Clinic.

Cleveland Clinic is a nonprofit, multi-specialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. Today, with nearly 1,300 beds on Cleveland Clinic main campus and 6,026 beds system-wide, we provide safer care for more people in more places than ever before. Our guiding principle is putting the patient's needs first in every aspect of care.

More than 4,500 physicians practice at Cleveland Clinic, providing care to patients from all 88 Ohio counties, from all 50 states, and from all over the world. Many of these patients travel to Ohio seeking highly specialized medical care. Reducing the burden associated with obtaining a license in other states will better allow Ohio physicians to attract out-of-state patients by enabling more convenient follow up. Ultimately, Senate Bill 6 will help to advance Ohio's status as a destination for medical care.

Senate Bill 6 also promotes the development of robust telehealth programs to expand access. As a leader in telehealth, Cleveland Clinic is continually improving programs that can extend access to care for patients in rural areas. These programs can do so by allowing patients to access primary and specialty care directly, or through partnerships with existing providers in the area who may lack the ability to provide needed specialty care directly. Certain programs – such as remote ICU monitoring – require significant sunk costs to implement. Multistate licensure allows such programs to extend their reach into other states, which can bring economies of scale that, in turn, reduce the cost to provide care for in-state patients.

Currently, Ohio physicians already may apply for licenses in other states, but must undergo a lengthy application process in each state in which they seek a license. Senate Bill 6 would reduce the administrative burden of physicians and the state by allowing qualified physicians to obtain licenses in multiple compact states by submitting one centralized application. To date, 23 states are part of the compact; another 7 states have passed the authorizing legislation and are in the process of implementation.

We note that the Compact includes a rigorous process for vetting and approving candidates for an expedited license. To qualify, a physician must hold a full and unrestricted medical license in a Compact member state (known as the state of principle licensure), and meet a number of additional requirements. The physician must undergo a state and federal criminal background check and primary source verification of credentials by the state of principle licensure.

If the physician meets all the requirements of the Compact, the state of primary licensure notifies the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission (IMLCC) via a "Letter of



Qualification.” The IMLCC then notifies the physician, who selects the states within the Compact where he/she wishes to be licensed and pays each state’s licensing fee. Upon receiving the Letter of Qualification, the licensing state(s) issue a license. Once a physician is issued a license via the Compact from a state, he or she is subject to laws governing medical practice in that state, including existing renewal and continuing medical education requirements.

Once again, Cleveland Clinic supports Senate Bill 6 and urges the committee to be supportive as well. We thank the bill sponsors, Senator Kristina Roegner and Senator Steve Huffman, for being leaders on this important topic. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I am available to be contacted with any questions you may have.