



17 S. High Street, #800 | Columbus, OH 43215
1-866-389-5653 | Fax: 614-224-9801 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
aarp.org/oh | ohaarp@aarp.org | twitter: @AARPOhio
facebook.com/AARPOH

**Written Testimony on Senate Bill 3
Senate Health Committee
February 10, 2021
Holly Holtzen, State Director, AARP Ohio**

Good morning Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and distinguished Senate Health Committee members.

My name is Holly Holtzen, and I serve as the State Director for AARP, Ohio. As you are aware, AARP, with 1.5 million members in Ohio, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps empower people to choose how they live as they age, strengthens communities, and fights for the issues that matter most to families, such as healthcare, employment, and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

AARP is here today to express our support for Senate Bill 3. This bill would enter Ohio into the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact (Nurse Compact) with 34 other states.¹ The Nurse Compact would streamline access and provide additional choices to patients and families by cutting red tape so patients can easily and conveniently access care from qualified nurses practicing across state lines. AARP generally supports state adoption of interstate licensure compacts for health care professionals—physicians, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses, Registered Nurses, and other licensed health professionals, such as psychologists, physical therapist, and occupational therapist—to expand provider networks and reduce interstate barriers to the use of telehealth services.

The need to improve access is critical in a place like Ohio, which has 155 Primary Care Health Professional Shortage Areas as of 2019.² For older residents, the impact of health care shortages is significant. Older adults sometimes lack the ability or resources to get to their appointments because of mobility issues, long travel distances to a provider, and wait times for appointments. This situation increases risks and costs associated with their health care and adds unnecessary stress to family caregivers. The Nurse Compact makes it easier and affordable for nurses to practice across state lines without the cost or unnecessary delay of applying for separate licenses. This helps efficiently and conveniently expand access to care. The Nurse Compact can contribute to reduced costs for healthcare providers who employ nurses and may ultimately drive lower cost for consumers.

The Nurse Compact also promotes safety and quality. It codifies uniform standards, ensures that states have the authority to enforce public protection at the state level, and makes it easier to exchange information among

¹ 33 States have enacted and fully implemented the RN Compact. New Jersey enacted the RN Compact and has partially implemented the RN Compact.

² Health Resources & Services Administration. <https://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/topics/shortageareas.aspx>

member states when issues arise. While only a very small percent of U.S. nurses ever require disciplinary action, if such a need arises, the Board of Nursing can take swift action regardless of the state where the nurse is licensed or practices.³

Moreover, the Nurse Compact can help residents quickly access lifesaving services during natural disasters, weather emergencies, or a public health crisis. As the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated, tapping into health care professionals across state lines can bolster local health care capacity and save lives when local need exceeds our local supply of health care workers.

Adopting the Nurse Compact is a common-sense way for Ohioans to expeditiously access care by encouraging nurses to provide care in-person and expand our telehealth capacity. Currently, more than 2 million nurses live in Nurse Compact states. They have the opportunity to practice in other Compact states, improving access to care for patients in need and adding support for their family caregivers. With the help of this Compact, more Ohioans will have access to high-quality primary care services they want and deserve.

The enactment of Senate Bill 3 would make Ohio the 35th state to join the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact. We urge you to vote yes to make sure Senate Bill 3 is voted out of the Senate Health Committee.

³ Facts about the NLC, NCSBN, available at: https://www.ncsbn.org/NLC_Facts-FINAL.pdf