

## **Nurse Licensure Compact Update**

### **Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC)**

I am including this general information section again for the benefit of new Board members. The mutual recognition model of nurse licensure allows a nurse to have one license (in his or her state of residency) and to practice in other states (both physically and electronically), subject to each state's practice law and regulation. Under mutual recognition, a nurse may practice across state lines unless otherwise restricted. In order to achieve mutual recognition, each state must enact legislation or regulation authorizing the Nurse Licensure Compact. States entering the compact also adopt administrative rules and regulations for implementation of the compact. Once the compact is enacted, each compact state designates a Nurse Licensure Compact Administrator to facilitate the exchange of information between the states relating to compact nurse licensure and regulation. On January 10, 2000, the Nurse Licensure Compact Administrators (NLCA) were organized to protect the public's health and safety by promoting compliance with the laws governing the practice of nursing in each party state through the mutual recognition of party state licenses. The Executive Director of the Texas Board of Nursing serves as the Compact Administrator for Texas.

### **NLCA Meetings**

The Nurse Licensure Compact Administrators (NLCA) meet via teleconference once every other month and face to face twice a year. In March, the NLCA Executive Committee and the full NLCA met prior to the NCSBN Mid-Year meeting in Chicago.

The NLCA Executive Committee consists of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary-Treasurer, two Committee Members-at-Large, and an APRN Administrator Member-at-Large. I serve as the APRN Administrator at Large. Texas is one of two states to have adopted the APRN Compact but it will be a few years before the states are ready to implement this more complex Compact. The NLCA Executive Committee is responsible for the following activities:

- Approve budgets, provide fiscal oversight and arrange for an annual fiscal review;
- Propose policies and procedures for consideration by the NLCA;
- Contract for services and monitor contract compliance;
- Monitor member compliance with the Compact and with applicable rules, regulations, policies, and procedures;
- Appoint committees, which may include standing and ad hoc committees;
- Approve and maintain minutes;
- Appoint arbitrators for disputes arising from party states;
- Develop uniform Compact rules for consideration by the NLCA and subsequent implementation by the states;
- Acknowledge NLCA members and, when appropriate, terminate membership privileges; and
  
- Perform such other functions as are necessary or appropriate to effect the purpose of the NLCA between meetings of the members of the NLCA.

At the March meeting the NLCA:

- Received final reports from the Licensure Portability Grants awarded to Kentucky and Nebraska, pending status of the grants awarded to North Dakota and Rhode Island, and new grant awarded to New Hampshire to implement the Compact. The National Council received the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Grant for Licensure Portability. The award is in the amount of \$342,000. The grant provides funding for implementation of the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) by providing incentive grants for states to implement; provide funding to defray costs related to implementation of the uniform licensure requirements, including criminal background checks, by providing incentive grants to states; and provide funding for an annual nurse licensure portability summit to discuss licensure issues with states and stakeholders. A press release regarding the grant can be found at: <https://www.ncsbn.org/1097.htm>
- Discussed the recent focus groups of Compact and Non-Compact states to discuss areas of common interest and sharing of information.
- Received a report on alternative programs for impaired nurses. This subcommittee will produce a final report on the commonalities and differences among these programs and make recommendations for changes to the NLCA.
- Received a report from the NURsys staff on tracking of multistate licensure history, including discipline. This national data base is required by the Compact to facilitate better communication among party states regarding licensure status and disciplinary status.
- Approved policies to implement the Compact.
- Received an update on the NLCA Strategic Initiatives.

### **Participating States**

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) has now passed in twenty-three states: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin. Kentucky's bill was implemented on June 1, 2007. Colorado's bill was implemented in October 2007. The 22 states which have implemented the Compact thus far are: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin. Rhode Island adopted the Compact but will not implement until July 2008.

For future reference on the Nurse Licensure Compact, refer to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing web site at:

<https://www.ncsbn.org/156.htm>

### **Pending Legislation**

There are pending Compact bills in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Vermont.

### **Texas Compact Statute and Rules**

The Texas NLC Statute can be found at

<http://www.bon.state.tx.us/nursinglaw/npa2.html#4-001>

The Texas Administrative Rules for the Compact can be found at this page by clicking on BON Rules and Regulations and navigating to Chapter 220.

<http://www.bon.state.tx.us/nursinglaw/rr.html>