

March 18, 2025

Representative Zack Fields, Co-Chair  
Representative Carolyn Hall, Co-Chair  
House Labor & Commerce Committee  
State Capitol Room 124  
Juneau AK, 99801  
[House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov)

**RE: AHHA Supports House Bill 131 – Nurse Licensure Compact**

Dear Co-Chair Fields, Co-Chair Hall, and Committee Members,

For over 70 years, the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association (AHHA) has served as a non-profit trade association representing Alaska's hospitals, nursing homes, and a growing number of healthcare partners across the continuum of care. AHHA members play an invaluable role, both as community providers and essential employers, in cities, towns, and villages across Alaska.

AHHA supports HB 131, which would allow Alaska to align with a vast majority of the country and modernize its licensing process through the nurse licensure compact (NLC). The NLC is license reciprocity for nurses, and represents a critical step for improving nursing shortages, delays in the nurse licensure process, and access to care in Alaska. The NLC is used by 43 states and jurisdictions across the country, allowing qualified nurses to practice across state lines with a single license. This reciprocity has been safely in use for almost 20 years.

Given its wide use, the NLC is mainstream and efficient. Again, joining the NLC means aligning with a vast majority of the country in following uniform practice standards that will modernize Alaska's licensing of nurses, taking the process from months to a matter of days.

One of the primary reasons the NLC was founded 20 years ago was to address the growing demand for nursing services in rural and underserved areas. Unfortunately, we find ourselves in desperate need of nurses across all of Alaska today. Alaska is projected to have the highest nurse vacancies in the United States by 2030 with over 5,000 openings and a 22% shortfall. Nurses are aging and Alaska has too few graduates to replace them. Alaska produces just 324 statewide nursing graduates—less than a quarter of what is needed in our state.

With the growing need for healthcare services in our population, employee churn, and exits or retirements from the workforce, the healthcare industry in Alaska must fill 9,430 job openings in healthcare each year, including over 1,400 nurse openings. By making it more efficient for nurses to obtain licensure in Alaska, the NLC will immediately increase the pool of qualified candidates that can fill critical vacancies quicker.



It is important to remember that within the NLC reciprocity framework, the way nurses practice in Alaska will not change one iota. This is because the Alaska Board of Nursing will continue to maintain full control of the scope of practice and enforcement, meaning the only thing that will change is the process for obtaining a license, which will become faster, more efficient, and safer.

The NLC also benefits our military families. Alaska is home to thousands of military members on assignment, many with spouses and family who are nurses. Joining the NLC will help these individuals seamlessly transition into our healthcare workforce.

Supporting reciprocity and joining compacts with other states is nothing new for Alaska and most certainly not an affront to our sovereignty. Alaska has been a member of at least 32 multistate compacts across several industries, and the NLC in particular offers an opportunity to enhance recruitment and retention of nurses. While “growing our own” is a crucial workforce strategy, it will take years to yield meaningful results with the shortages we are experiencing. Therefore, we should do everything in our power to welcome outside nurses to our state.

In closing, addressing workforce shortages in the healthcare sector requires a multifaceted approach with some strategies being long term and others being immediate. Joining the NLC is an immediate strategy that will help improve nursing shortages in urban and rural Alaska, delays in the nurse licensure process, and access to care across our state. Please pass HB 131.

Thank you for considering this request and for your commitment to advancing healthcare for Alaska.

Sincerely,

Jared C. Kosin, JD, MBA  
President & CEO