

Nine States Join Interstate Medical Licensure Compact

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In May, three states joined the , in addition to the six states that had already joined. A sufficient number of states have now joined to trigger implementation of the Compact through the creation of the “Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission.” This may prove to be a significant development in facilitating physician licensure across state lines for purposes of delivering services through telehealth technology.

As telehealth has expanded nationwide, state licensing requirements have become an increasingly significant hurdle. Physicians are generally prohibited from delivering health care services through telemedicine to patients in states in which they are not licensed. And applying for a license in multiple states frequently requires duplicate records and significant waiting times.

In response to these challenges, the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) created the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (the Compact), which would streamline and expedite the process through which physicians can obtain state licenses. Under the Compact, physicians who wish to practice in multiple participating states would be able to obtain multiple state licenses without going through the burdensome process of submitting a formal application or providing the same materials to each participating state medical board. The physician would select a member state as the “state of principal licensure,” and then select the other member states in which he or she also seeks a medical license. The medical board in the physician’s principal state would evaluate the physician’s qualifications, including the eligibility requirements spelled out in the Compact [legislation](#). The Interstate Commission would collect applicable fees and transmit the physician’s information and licensure fees to the additional states, which would then make the licensure decision. The fees for state medical boards can still be substantial, ranging from \$650 to \$2,000, depending on the state. Under the Compact, state medical boards will still control the ultimate licensure decision and maintain regulatory authority.

In May, Alabama became the seventh state to join the Compact, triggering the formation of the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission. Alabama joined Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming in formally adopting the Compact. Subsequently, Minnesota and Nevada joined as well. And ten additional states have similar legislation pending.

Now that the minimum seven states have approved the Compact, the next step is for the FSMB to form an Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Commission to create bylaws for licensure. The commission will meet later this year to discuss the management and administration of the Compact,

but this process could take up to a year. According to the FSMB, the commission's role in the licensure process will be to "provide oversight and administration of the Compact, create and enforce rules governing the processes outlined in the Compact, and promote interstate cooperation."

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National Law Review, Volume V, Number 184

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/nine-states-join-interstate-medical-licensure-compact>