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# Minnesota should join the national Nurse Licensure Compact



## STATE POLICYMAKERS SHOULD:

- **Allow Minnesota to join the national Nurse Licensure Compact**

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Minnesota needed all the qualified medical professionals it could get. Licensing, however, proved to be an obstacle to qualified healthcare workers from outside the state putting their skills to use here. Gov.

Walz did eventually sign an order allowing health-care workers licensed in other states to work in Minnesota, but a permanent solution would be for our state to join the national Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC).

## What is the Nurse Licensure Compact?

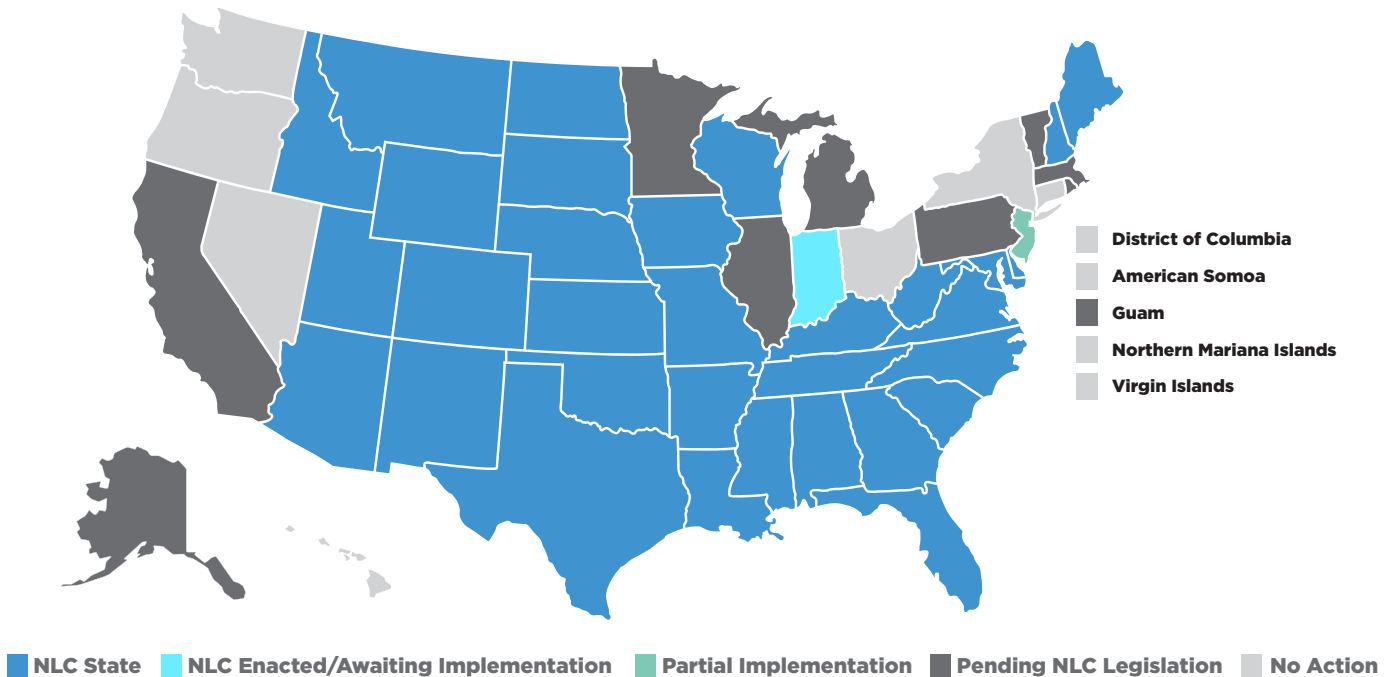
As the Minnesota Board of Nursing (MBN) describes it:

*The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allows a nurse (RN and LPN/VN) to have one compact license in the nurse's primary state of residence (the home state) with authority to practice in person or via telehealth in other compact states (remote states). The nurse*

*must follow the nurse practice act of each state. The mission of the Nurse Licensure Compact is: The Nurse Licensure Compact advances public protection and access to care through the mutual recognition of one state-based license that is enforced locally and recognized nationally.*

Currently 34 states are members of the compact.

## CURRENT NLC STATES AND STATUS



SOURCE: NATIONAL ACADEMY FOR STATE HEALTH POLICY

## Why isn't Minnesota in the compact?

Joining the NLC would clearly be good policy, allowing Minnesotans access to a larger pool of trained healthcare professionals. So why haven't we joined?

The main reason is opposition from the unions. A fact sheet put out by the Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) in 2015 says:

*The Compact is a direct threat to MNA as a professional association and sole collective bargaining agent for nurses in MN. No other large healthcare/labor states have allowed adoption of this Compact.*

Their membership feels very differently, however. The MBN says:

*Nurses frequently contact the Board of Nurs-*

*ing questioning when Minnesota will join the Nurse Licensure Compact. To address these queries, the Minnesota Board of Nursing (MBN), in collaboration with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), conducted a web survey of all registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) with an active license in Minnesota to assess nurses' knowledge of and opinions about the NLC. The survey was comprised of 12 questions and was sent in February 2017, to 122,973 nurses of which 20,834 responded.*

*Overall, more than 80% of respondents to the survey were in favor of Minnesota joining the NLC.*

## Conclusions

Do we think that other states are so slipshod in their licensing practices that they are rife with unsafe practitioners who would pose a threat to Minnesotans? Of course not. But public safety is not the issue here. The real issue is the desire of the MNA to protect its privileged position. This goes

against the desires of the nurses themselves and against the interest of Minnesotan's health. Minnesota should join the Nurse Licensure Compact.

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