

# SUPPORT SENATE BILL 41

## Nurse Licensure Compact Sponsored by Sen. Sara Feigenholtz

**IHA Position:** IHA strongly supports Senate Bill 41, which would establish the Nurse Licensure Compact in Illinois. Illinois faces an estimated shortfall of 14,400 nurses by 2025. This is in addition to the current nurse shortage, which has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge Illinois lawmakers to co-sponsor and vote YES on Senate Bill 41.

**Background:** Initially organized in 2000, 39 jurisdictions, including all states that border Illinois, are members of the enhanced Nursing Licensure Compact (eNLC). The eNLC allows for multistate licensure to practice and communicate with patients or students, both physically and electronically. There are over **2 million nurses** currently residing in eNLC states who have the opportunity to practice in other **compact** states using their original home state license.

During the pandemic, a temporary rule was implemented allowing nurses licensed in other states to practice in Illinois. This action was crucial to ensure patients received needed care during the crisis. These flexibilities acted as a de facto Compact. If legislative action is not taken prior to May 11, 2023, the scheduled end of the Public Health Emergency, up to 15,000 nurses from other states who have been practicing via the temporary rule must immediately cease caring for Illinois patients. The Compact establishes a permanent solution that will strengthen Illinois' healthcare system by addressing nursing shortages and preparing for future emergencies. The Compact will benefit Illinoisans by:

- **Quickly and efficiently expanding access to quality nursing services.** With shortages impacting every corner of the state, enacting the Compact is even more critical.
- **Expanding telehealth coverage** by allowing nurses to practice in any member state through the delivery of virtual visits and other electronically delivered care. This enables facilities to offer patients greater access to those services.
- **Facilitating emergency preparedness** by enabling the healthcare delivery system to react more dynamically to unforeseen and sudden changes in nursing needs, whether a natural disaster, pandemic or other emergency.
- **Promoting defined safety standards** that require all participating states to have uniform licensure requirements; identify clear standards for conducting state and federal background checks upon the licensing of all new nurses; and allow each state to fully retain the authority to set its licensure standards. Illinois is already compliant with eNLC safety standards.
- **Improving cost effectiveness.** Nurses will not have to obtain additional nursing licensures. This makes practicing across state borders affordable and convenient, and reduces educators' need for multiple licenses to facilitate online nursing education.
- **Benefiting military families** by allowing military spouse nurses to seamlessly continue working without obtaining a new license each time they relocate.

## PLEASE CO-SPONSOR AND SUPPORT SB 41