

The Road Traveled: Revisiting the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC)

Presented to:



Presented by:

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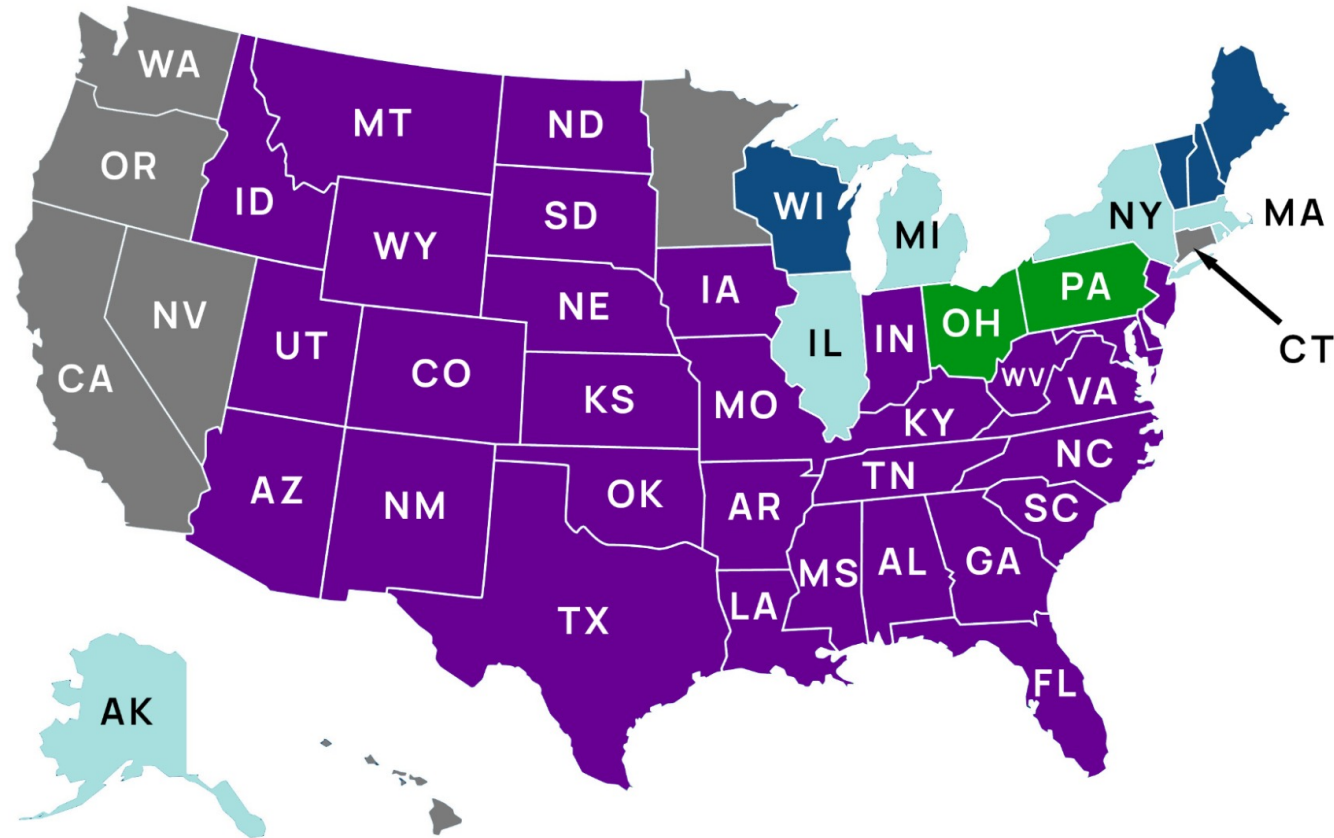
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NLC Status by State



Background

Despite legislation being proposed each year for more than a decade, Massachusetts has not joined the NLC.

This is in part due to strong opposition from the Massachusetts Nurses Association (MNA), the third-largest registered nurses' union in the United States.

The Challenge

Formed in 2022, the NCWS was tasked with recommending ideas to address the nursing workforce shortage in Massachusetts.

One of our goals in the past year was to work closely with MNA leadership to understand their objections while determining any benefit to Massachusetts joining the NLC.

Key Questions

The determination of Massachusetts joining the NLC was subjected to a critical, evidence-based review.

Subject matter experts participated in numerous discussions to answer the following questions:

What is the purpose of the Compact?

Are there any unintended consequences of joining the NLC?

What are the benefits of joining the Compact?

Does joining the NLC actually solve any of the nursing workforce challenges?

MNA Objections to the NLC

- Not a real solution for nursing shortages
- Promotes an assembly-line approach to nursing
- Not necessary for emergency response or military spouses
- Loss of local control and revenue for nursing licensure
- Prioritizes removing care from the bedside
- Creates administrative complexities
- Concerns regarding oversight and disciplinary processes

The Method

- A partnership with the MNA was formed to fully investigate arguments and concerns with joining the NLC.
- A committee of experts in nursing practice and leadership was assembled to critically evaluate the NLC as well as the processes currently in place in Massachusetts.
 - This group included representation from the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing.

The Results

- Ultimately, the recommendation of the Policy and Practice committee to join the NLC, as proposed in House Bill No. 1211 and Senate Bill No. 747, was presented to the full NCWS in December 2023.
- A vote by members of the NCWS on the recommendation was undertaken and passed with **96% voting in favor** of the recommendations that supported joining the NLC.

Key Findings

- Joining the NLC would facilitate Massachusetts's emergency preparedness, enabling the health care delivery system to react more dynamically to unforeseen and sudden changes in nursing needs.
 - Massachusetts faced significant challenges meeting the demand for nurses during COVID-19, most notably regarding ICU RNs, and data suggest Massachusetts hospital employers had greater difficulty than comparator states.
 - The Compact would enhance the ability of Massachusetts to more readily address staffing needs, particularly for the nurse specialties most sought during pandemics, natural disasters, or other crises.

Key Findings

Nearly 25 years after the NLC was initiated, the Massachusetts Nursing Council on Workforce Sustainability (NCWS) *revisited the impact and effectiveness of the NLC to facilitate interstate work for nurses.*

As of October 2023, **41 states joined the Compact licensure agreement**, leading to benefits for both patients and nurses.

Compact states have reported **benefits for both patients and nurses.**

Despite more than a decade of proposed legislation, MA has not joined the NLC.

The HPC report determined there are **no substantial drawbacks** to MA joining the NLC.

What Did We Learn

- There are multiple stakeholders in every issue affecting healthcare and the workforce.
- Partner with the stakeholders to find solutions, not because they agree with you.
- Be willing to ask the tough questions even when solutions are widely accepted.

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Thank You