

RESOLUTION #2023-17

A resolution of support for Alaska joining the multistate nurse licensure compact.

WHEREAS, Alaska faces a debilitating healthcare workforce shortage that threatens our healthcare system, economy, and access to care; and

WHEREAS, Alaska will have the highest nurse vacancies in the United States by 2030 with over 5,000 openings and a 22% shortfall; and

WHEREAS, Alaska already cannot keep up with demand, which requires filling 6,300 job openings each year, including over 1,400 nurse openings; and

WHEREAS, the average age of a nurse and nurse practitioner in the U.S. is 57 and Alaska is not graduating enough nursing students to fill this growing need now or in the future; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's slow licensing process is a deterrent for nurses wanting to practice here with recruits regularly turning down jobs over waiting months for a license; and

WHEREAS, there is an immediate, commonsense solution that the State of Alaska can take to address these workforce challenges - join the multistate nurse licensure compact (NLC); and

WHEREAS, the NLC is used by 39 states and jurisdictions across the country, allowing qualified nurses to practice across state lines with a single license; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, safe and efficient licensing will directly benefit the health of Alaska's rural and underserved communities, and support Alaska's military community by allowing military spouse nurses to work seamlessly upon arrival to Alaska; and

WHEREAS, joining a multistate compact is not an affront to Alaska's sovereignty as Alaska has been a member of at least 32 multistate compacts across several industries, and

Alaska's Board of Nursing will maintain full control of licensure, discipline, scope of practice, and authority to suspend unqualified nurses in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, enacting the NLC requires the Alaska Legislature to adopt the compact into law, and any future changes will be subject to the scrutiny and approval of Alaska's elected officials; and

WHEREAS, the NLC is administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, which is a not-for-profit organization consisting of the nursing regulatory bodies from all 50 states, including Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Hawaii, which faces similar healthcare delivery challenges as Alaska, is strongly considering joining the NLC, as demonstrated by support from the Hawaii Nurses Association—a prominent labor union; and

WHEREAS, Alaska nurses overwhelmingly support the NLC with 92% of respondents favoring the NLC in a formal survey conducted in 2019 by the Alaska Board of Nursing; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports Alaska joining the NLC and urges the Alaska Legislature to pass legislation in the 2023-24 legislative session permitting Alaska to enact the NLC.