



What Nurse Leaders Need to Know

Introduction

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allows a nurse (registered nurses [RNs] and licensed practical/vocational nurses [LPN/VNs]) to hold one multistate license in the primary state of residence (the home state) and to practice in-person or telephonically in other compact states (remote states), while subject to each state's practice and discipline laws. Advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) are not included in the NLC.

Accountability for Nurse Licensure

Health care facilities are accountable to accreditation bodies, regulatory agencies, payers and malpractice carriers for ensuring that nurses under their employment are appropriately licensed. Such entities generally have penalties associated with non-compliance in this area.

Confirmation of Nurse License Status

Employers can confirm a nurse license and view a Nursys® QuickConfirm report at www.nursys.com at no cost. The report contains the nurse's name, state, license type, license number, compact status, license status, expiration date, discipline against license and discipline against privilege to practice. Employers can also view an individualized authorization to practice map which displays the states where a nurse can legally practice.

It is recommended that a facility's employed nurses are registered in e-Notify at www.nursys.com so that the facility will receive automatic updates when a nurse is disciplined or has a license status change for any license the nurse holds.

Where Practice Takes Place

Lawful practice requires that a nurse be licensed or have the privilege to practice in the state where the patient or recipient of practice is located at the time nursing service is provided. This is not to be confused with the state where the patient resides because the patient may not be located in the state of residency at the time practice occurs.

Multistate Health Care Systems

A nurse executive with multistate responsibility for nurses practicing in various facilities, and who may provide guidance or direction to staff in these states, should be appropriately licensed in such states.

Telehealth

Telehealth is not limited to telehealth programs or sophisticated telehealth technology. Rather, telehealth practice may be any communication between a nurse and a patient, for example, by phone, email or text, wherein a nurse is practicing (see definition of nursing practice below). When the patient is located in another state during the telephonic encounter, the nurse should be appropriately licensed or hold the privilege to practice via a multistate license, in the state where the patient is located at that time.

How is Nursing Practice Defined?

Many state boards of nursing will generally define nursing practice as some variation of "when a nurse utilizes his or her education/knowledge, skills or judgment/decisionmaking."

Travel Nurses

When a nurse is on a travel assignment at a facility and the nurse who holds a multistate license has a primary state of legal residence in the compact home state, that nurse is able to practice in the remote compact state under the multistate privilege to practice as long as the nurse maintains legal residence status in the home state. Should this nurse's residency status change and the state where the facility is located becomes the new home state, then the nurse must immediately apply for license by endorsement in the new home state.





Hiring Nurses from Other States

Noncompact to Compact:

- When hiring a nurse who resides in a noncompact state for employment in a compact state, if the nurse will reside in the compact state where the facility is located, the nurse is responsible for being licensed in that state and should apply for licensure by endorsement in the new state of residence. In order for the nurse to be able to practice immediately upon moving, the nurse may apply prior to the move. This nurse may opt to obtain a single state license while applying as a resident of a noncompact state. Certain states offer a temporary single state license. This may also be helpful to the nurse who needs to start practice in the short term. A multistate license may be issued if residency and eligibility requirements are met.

Compact to Compact:

- When hiring a nurse who resides in a compact state for employment in another compact state, if the nurse will reside in the compact state where the facility is located, the nurse is responsible for being licensed in that state and should apply for licensure by endorsement in the new state of residence upon moving to that state. The nurse should not delay. There is no grace period. The nurse may not wait until the former license expires to apply in the nurse's new state of legal residency. The nurse may practice on the former home state license only until the multistate license in the new NLC home state is issued. Proof of residency such as a driver's license may be required. Upon issuance of a new multistate license, the former license is inactivated.

Definition:

- **Primary State of Residence:** The state (also known as the home state) in which a nurse declares a primary residence for legal purposes. Sources used to verify a nurse's primary residence may include driver's license, federal income tax return or voter registration. PSOR refers to legal residency status and does not pertain to home or property ownership. Only one state can be identified as the primary state of legal residence for NLC purposes.

