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Helpful Tips for Nursing Graduates Video Transcript

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Presenter

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- [Jim] Okay, we're going to get started. My name is Jim Puente. I'm the director of the Nurse Licensure Compact. And today we're going to talk about how the Nurse Licensure Compact works, in particular for nursing students and new graduates. And this webinar is being recorded, so we're recording as we speak. And at the end of the presentation, we will provide you with the slides through email.

At the end of the presentation, if you have any questions, you may unmute yourself at that time to ask your question. So, let's go ahead and get started. The Nurse Licensure Compact: Licensing Without the Hassle.

What new grads need to know. All right. Let's get started. So, I'm assuming everyone can see the slides. If you cannot, let me know. But this is the current map of the Compact states, of which there are 39 states. And when you have a Compact License, which is a multi-state license, you're able to practice in every of the Compact states.

Now, the Compact states are those that are blue on the map. Okay? So that means with one license that is issued in your primary state of residency, you're able to practice in other Compact states. And as I said, there are 39.

The goal for the Compact is for all 50 states to be in the Compact. And so in the next few years, each year, we see more states get added on as they pass the legislation. You'll notice on the map that there are two states that are light blue and actually, this map, it looks like it's a little bit outdated because Vermont is light blue and Vermont is already in the Compact.

But Ohio, Pennsylvania, and the Virgin Islands, all have passed the Compact, but they're currently implementing it. So, within the next year, those states will be dark blue. They'll be like the rest of them where they're issuing licenses, and you're able to work in those states. We do know at this point that for the state of Ohio, as of January 1 of 2023, Ohio will begin issuing Compact Licenses, they'll begin accepting applications for it, and nurses from other Compact states will be able to start working in Ohio.

We don't have the date for Pennsylvania or the Virgin Islands yet, and I can tell you that the holdup in Pennsylvania is related to waiting for approval from the FBI to be able to perform criminal background checks.

They're kind of out of our hands, out of the state's hands as well since the FBI is a federal agency. You see a number of gray states on the map, whether they're gray or green, these are states that are not in the Compact. We anticipate that all of those that are gray or green will likely introduce legislation in 2023 to try to join the Compact.

They will not all be successful, but we do anticipate getting past the 30 or getting past the 40 mark, I should say, and adding some more states in 2023. Keep in mind that this Compact is for RNs and LPNs. It does not pertain to advanced practice nurses.

Let's continue. Okay, these are just some of the objectives for today's webinar to describe how the Compact works, how it is similar to a driver's license, to understand nursys.com, to answer your questions, and to talk about resources and common misunderstandings.

Okay, so first, the terminology. A multi-state license and a Compact License are the same thing. Two different words for the same thing. It's one license that's issued in a Compact state. So, keep that in mind, only a Compact state issues Compact Licenses, but it needs to be the state where you reside, which is the state that issues the license, and that with that one license, you can practice in all Compact states.

Party state is another term for a Compact state. You may not see that too often. If you live in a non-Compact state, you have a single-state license. Because non-Compact states don't issue multi-state licenses. They only issue single-state licenses.

Also, if you're not eligible for a Compact License, then your only other option is to have a number of different single-state licenses, right? The home state is always going to be your primary state of residency for legal purposes. And when we talk about the primary state of residence, we abbreviate that PSOR.

We're talking about the state where your legal documentation shows that you live. Legal documents such as your driver's license. A remote state is a Compact state other than your home state. So, you may live in Florida, but practice as a travel nurse in Arizona.

Arizona would be the remote state. Okay. And then the privilege to practice. Privilege to practice is that authority to practice in other Compact states based on your multistate license.

All right, so the Compact...why aren't all 50 states in the Compact? Because it is legislation. It's an agreement between states that join the Compact, and it's in the form of a bill.

A state bill that has to be passed through your legislature and signed by the governor. And all states haven't done that yet. And it's much like any other issue where there's not uniformity from state to state because all states don't have the same laws.

And that is our goal. We're working with each state because nurses in each state want their state to join the Compact. And we're working so that they can hopefully successfully pass the Compact legislation so that we can have one nation where you only have to use one multi-state license to practice anywhere. Okay, we already talked about that this is for RNs and LPNs, but it's important to note that with the Compact License, this is for practice in another state, whether you are in-person traveling to another state, or whether you're practicing with a patient in another state through telehealth.

When you're practicing in a telehealth mode, you are required to be licensed in the states where your patients are located. So keep that in mind that if you have a job that requires you to practice via telehealth in 10 different states, that requires you to have a license in each of those states.

Of course, unless you have a multi-state license, and these are Compact states. So, it's important to keep in mind that you have to be a resident of a Compact state in order to be able to get a Compact License.

Nurses who live in non-Compact states cannot get the Compact License because their state hasn't joined the Compact yet. At the time that you're applying for a license, the state Board of Nursing will evaluate to see if you meet all of the requirements for a Compact License. Okay? So that is something that they will go through as a part of your application process.

It's a good idea to try to think of the Compact License as a driver's license, because if you ask yourself which state issues your driver's license, it is the state where you live. That's where you go to your state Department of Motor Vehicles and get a license.

And if you were to change your state of residency and move to some other state in the country, you know that you need to get a new driver's license in that new state. And that's the exact same way that the nurse Compact License works. While you're holding the license, while you're maintaining residency in a state, you're able to drive in any state in the country.

And eventually, when all 50 states are in the Nurse Compact, you'll be able to hold one license in your state of residency and practice in any state in the country. So keep in mind those similarities that it's issued in your state of residency and allows you to practice in every other Compact state, the way that your driver's license allows you to drive in every other state that joined the Driver's License Compact.

Most people aren't aware that there's such a thing as a Driver's License Compact, but that's the reason that you don't have to get a separate driver's license in every state, because the other states accept the driver's license of your home state. And that's the way the nurse Compact works as well.

But the most important aspect here is that knowing that if you ever change your state of legal residency, there are requirements related to that. Namely, that you need to get a new driver's license. And if you happen to have a nurse Compact License, you've got to get a new nurse Compact License because you change your state of residency.

All right. So, we know that practice requires licensure. Unfortunately, many nurses don't know that telehealth practice requires licensure as well. And as we said earlier, that license is required in the state where your patient is located when you're practicing via telehealth.

So you always have to be aware of where your patients are located if you are practicing with someone via telephone. All right. So, let's talk about the application process for new graduates and what that looks like. First, some of the frequently asked questions that nursing students have of us.

Where can I find the application? You're going to find it on your state Board of nursing website. Now, if you live in a Compact state, you want to get that application in the state where you're going to live. If you're going to school in a different state than where you plan to live, you're going to apply to the state where you plan to live.

And the reason is, as we said many times already, that the Compact License is based on your state of residency, not where you happen to be going to school. If you're going to school in the same state, that is also your legal state of residency, obviously, that's the state where you're going to apply for your license, but it all surrounds what your legal state of residency is.

How much is the application? So, there's not one uniform cost for a license. Every state determines their own fees when it comes to nurse licenses, to what the application is, to what the criminal background check fee is, it varies from state to state. What I would tell you is that some states have an application fee as low as \$50. Some states are as high as \$250 or \$300.

So, that information will be on your particular application that you're filling out. How long does the processing of your application take? I would say again that that's going to depend on that particular state. What I tend to see is that the larger the state, the higher volume of applications that they have, and sometimes it takes longer.

In a smaller state, sometimes you can get a license quicker. But all in all, I think it's going to take anywhere from one week up to two months, depending on the state. Do I have to pass NCLEX again if I move to another state? This is a common question.

The NCLEX is something that you should only have to pass once in your career, and usually, you're going to do that right when you graduate from your nursing program. The sooner you take the NCLEX after graduating, the better, because you will have retained the knowledge as opposed to waiting a period of time when you might have forgotten what you learned.

So, the key here is that, fortunately, you only have to pass it once. What if I need a license in another state? So, your very first license when you graduate is you're going to complete the license by examination application.

And again, you'll find that on your state Board of Nursing website. But after you've issued that license, if you find you need another license because you've got a job in a different state, then you're going to go to the Board of Nursing website in that state and complete the license by endorsement application. So two different applications.

The first one is license by exam, and every license after that will be the application for license by endorsement. This is an example. So, we have a screenshot here from, I think this is from the state of Florida. So you can see kind of what it looks like when you go to a Board of Nursing website and you see where the arrow is pointing to the license by examination application for RNs and LPNs.

That would be the one that a new graduate is completing for their first license. Now, as you get into the application, one of the things you want to notice is, is there a checkbox to indicate if you want a single-state license or a multi-state license? In some states, you will have that option, in some states, you will not.

So in other words, in some states, if you are resident, you are in fact applying for a Compact License. In other states, there's the option. This is a helpful resource for students and new graduates because it's a flowchart of all the steps that you go through in getting your initial license by exam.

This flowchart is available on our website within our toolkit. And actually, I'm going to have to update this URL, because if you just go to nlc.gov, nlc.gov, and then click on the toolkit link, you'll get right to where this flowchart is located.

And this kind of just takes you in a closer view of the information on that flowchart. So, it asks you if you're a resident of a Compact state, yes or no? And takes you down the path of the steps you need to take.

And again, this is the bottom half of that flow chart. So, in the end of the process, if you're a resident of a non-complex state, you're going to get a single-state license. If you're a resident of a Compact state, it will be a multi-state license, assuming you're eligible.

Okay. Some of the key points for new graduates. And these points pertain to NCLEX in particular. NCLEX can be taken in any state. So the N is for national, meaning it's a national exam. That means it's the same wherever you go. It's not a state exam.

It's not different in certain states. You're going to...we just said this, it's a national exam and the same everywhere. That's the second item. The third item, you never have to pass it again. You just got to pass it once, even though you move to another state. Number four, there's not a requirement that you have to take the exam in the state where your school is located.

And going back to number one, as we said, you can take it in any state. So, there's testing locations throughout the country. So you actually take it in the location most convenient for you. It's not necessarily tied to the state where you're sitting for it. What's going to happen is the results of your exam are going to get sent electronically to the state where you applied for a license.

That's why you can sit in a different state than where you live or then where you applied, because you had to initially ask a request from the Board of Nursing approval to test. And the Board of Nursing that you're seeking approval from is the one you want to license from. So that's how the results are going to be routed to the Board of Nursing.

Unless you plan to practice in the same state where you graduated from your nursing program, there's not a requirement that you get your first license in that state. So, let me explain this.

If I'm a nursing student in Texas, and that's not my home state, my home state is Missouri, sometimes we hear students tell us that they are recommended to get their first license, the same state where they went to school. Unfortunately, if you're leaving that state after graduation and it's a Compact state, you're going to end up paying twice because you're going to pay in Texas, in my example, and then when I get to my home state, which is Missouri, I'm going to pay again because my license has to be issued by my state of residency.

So, even though you want to take your exam right away after graduation, you can. And in my scenario, I could still take it from Texas, but I'm applying to the Missouri Board of Nursing because that's where I want my license issued from because that's my legal state of residency. Again, it doesn't matter where you take the exam.

So, if you are or you will be a resident of a Compact state, that's the state you want to apply to. The state where you can declare it's your legal state or primary state of residency. So, in other words, when we say

that, when you complete the application, there's going to be a form in the application, and that form is going to ask you, "What is your primary state of residency for legal purposes?"

And you're going to indicate that state on that line, and then the Board of Nursing is going to ask you for proof to back up what you just indicated on that line. So, if I say my state of residency is Missouri, now I should have a Missouri driver's license and maybe an additional piece of identification to verify that that's my state of residency.

Okay? All right. A few additional things. Just to reiterate. Primary state of residency is the state where you legally reside and the state where you can prove that you reside.

So that proof can be shown by your driver's license, your voter's registration card, etc. When we talk about primary state of residency, we're not talking about owning a home or owning property. You may, in fact, not own a home, that doesn't mean you can't get a nursing license. But the very word residence or residency makes a lot of people think about a house.

And so it does not pertain to where your house is located, but where you live, as evidenced on your legal documents. And you'll always only have one primary state of residency.

That's why it includes the word primary. That one place that's your state of residency. You obviously, don't have more than one driver's license in your wallet or purse because you can only legally have one. And that one is issued in your state of legal residency. And to avoid any hassles, all of that legal documentation should be aligned.

Everything should be in the same state. You shouldn't be disorganized to where your driver's license is from one state, you're voting in a different state, maybe your car's registered in even a different state, etc. When you're a resident of a state, everything should be in that one state.

Look, here's a common question. Which state's continuing education requirements does the nurse need to meet? Well, within the Compact, how many licenses do you have? You have one multi-state license.

So if that state that issued your multi-state license requires continuing education, then that's the state that you owe continuing education to. Of course, it's possible that the state that issued your Compact License doesn't require continuing education, in which case you don't have to do continuing education.

That's not something that's uniform across the country. There are many, many states that don't require continuing education. But keep in mind that if, in addition to your Compact License, you also have licenses in non-Compact states, which is possible, then those states may have their own continuing education requirements.

So that's separate from the Compacts because they're not a part of the Compact. All right, a couple of resources. First of all, you should know about the national database for nurse licenses, which is called nursys.com.

Again, the national database for nurse licenses. So there's over 5 million nurses in the country, and you can look them up at nursys.com, which you see at the top of the slide, N-U-R-S-Y-S, and that's abbreviated for nurse system. Okay?

And so once the nurses are licensed, you will see them in that database. You can pull up a nurse's information and look at their information. And this is primarily where employers should go. When an

employer is hiring you and looking to see what licenses you have, they would go to nursys.com because it's going to show which licenses you have, what the expiration date is, when it was issued, whether it's a Compact License or a non-Compact License, meaning a single-state license.

But also it's going to show if you have any discipline, because if you were disciplined at any time, that's public information, and it will be included there. Within your record, when you pull up your record in nursys.com under the Quick Confirm tab, you'll see that you also have what's called a Unique Nurse Identifier, which is a number that is unique to you in the same way that your social security number is unique to you.

Now, this is a relatively newer thing in that it's existed for several years, but in the future, I think that you will see your unique nurse number attached to many different things throughout your career.

And I think that that, of course, has yet to roll out, but I believe we'll see it implemented in many different places. Okay. One other thing about nursys.com. So, this is a screenshot of the home page. In the middle is where you're going to go to look up a license called Quick Confirm.

But on the left where the arrow is pointing is called E-Notify. And E-Notify is a free service where any nurse can enroll themselves and it gives you reminders of when your licenses are going to expire in advance. But it also in the event that you forgot to renew it, it also is going to send you a notification to let you know that your license has expired.

So basically, it's helpful reminders plus also notification of any change in the status of your license. That's basically, the information on this slide as well. But what this adds is that employers can also enroll all of their nurses in E-Notify for that same type of information and they'll also be notified of any disciplinary action taken against your license in any state.

So, we talked a little bit earlier about our toolkit which is on nlc.gov, and in the left side navigation bar you will see the toolkit where you will see many different fact sheets as well as brief videos of approximately three to five minutes about different topics within the Compact. So, if you need to brush up on it or need further clarification, want to hear it again, you can watch any of those brief videos.

And that's the end of the presentation. We're going to take questions now but I do want to point out my email address, nursecompact@ncsbn.org. You're able to send any questions there after this, if your question doesn't get answered during the webinar.

We will respond to you via email if you send us a question. And then lastly, since this presentation is focused on nursing students and new graduates, we also are attending the National Student Nurses Association MidYear Conference coming up in November, and we will be having several presentations there at the conference, as well as we will be an exhibitor in the Exhibit Hall.

So if any of you are attending that, you certainly can visit us at our exhibit booth and ask us questions there. And we will also be handing out information. So, I am going to stop sharing at this point. All right, we are still recording. And let me go see if there's anything in the chat.

Nothing is in the chat, so you're probably muted, so if you have a question, you can just unmute yourself and ask your question.

- [Female] I do want to move to Georgia. So, should I just move to Georgia, get my driver's license over there and get that proof of residency, and then apply for the Georgia Board of Nursing?

- Yeah. Are you a student, new graduate?

- No, in spring, I will graduate, but I'll be graduating from North Dakota.

- You're going to graduate in North Dakota, but you're going to be living in Georgia?

- Correct.

- Okay. So when you're ready to apply, you're going to apply to the Georgia Board of Nursing, and you're going to complete the license by examination application. And that application will ask you to provide a piece of proof that you're a Georgia resident.

- Okay, that sounds good. All right. Thank you.

- Okay, sure. You're welcome. Anyone else? We do have an item in the chat that just came up. It says, "Just to confirm if I understand correctly, if a person changes their state of residency to a Compact state but already has a Compact License, they have to apply for another Compact License?"

That's correct. That is correct. It's just like a driver's license. Again, if you were an Arizona resident with an Arizona driver's license and you moved to Florida, you know that you're required to now get a Florida driver's license. You don't continue driving on your Arizona driver's license.

So, this is the same way that the nurse Compact works. Changing your state of residency means it's time for a new license, and the new one replaces the old one, so the old one goes away. "When is the appropriate time to apply for a license?"

I don't know if you mean as far as a student graduating or do you mean when someone moves to another state. Can you specify? Oh, in regards to taking NCLEX? I believe it's in your final semester but I am not certain exactly.

Typically, your nursing faculty at your school, in your program tell you when you should be applying. I believe in some places you can apply even prior to graduation. So, I'm not positive on that.

But if it's not during your last semester, then it's immediately after graduation. And that may depend on the state because there are states that give you a temporary license until it comes in. Okay. Jasmine says, "If I live in a neighboring state, does my Compact License allow me to work without additional paperwork?"

Yeah, that's the whole idea of the Compact. That when your license is issued in your home state, you work in any other Compact state without doing anything. Without any paperwork, without any fees. There's nothing you need to do to work in other Compact states. Whether it's a neighboring state or a state across the country, there's nothing you need to do. Deborah says, "In Virginia, the Board of Nursing allows you to apply two weeks before you complete your nursing program."

So, yeah, that's a good indication that when you can apply may vary by state. So you want to take a look at the Board of Nursing website. Stacey says, "Yes, students can begin the application process when

they register with Pearson VUE." So normally, in order to register with Pearson VUE, you have to be authorized to test.

The Board of Nursing authorizes you to test, it's called ATT, and you do that by starting the application process with the board. Praise [SP] says, "I'm curious on when you have to get the new license after moving states." Immediately.

So, upon moving to another state, I would say within the first few weeks, you should be starting the application process in the new state. McKenzie says, "So does the Compact License really only benefit those that do travel nursing?" No, it benefits all types of nurses. It benefits every nurse that may go to another state, whether it's travel nursing, whether it's because you're a home health nurse, visiting nurses on either side of the border, whether you're a flight nurse traveling to other states, whether you're a telephonic or telehealth nurse talking with patients in other states, whether you're responding to a disaster like the hurricane that happened recently, or even the pandemic.

So, it's for any nurse that needs the ability to practice in another state without having to go through a licensure process. And keep in mind that you may live on a border with another state where you live in one state and work in the other state.

You only need a license in your home state. You won't need to get a license in the neighboring state if it's also another Compact state. So, the Compact was developed because a nurse needs to have a separate license in every state of practice. And that is a burden, and it's cumbersome and it's expensive, and it takes time.

And you would have to get a separate background check for every license that you have. So, it's more convenient and more efficient to have one license for the whole country, and that is what the Compact's intent is as its goal. Okay, so Jamila says, "So, if a nurse living in Pennsylvania has a single state license and then the state transitions into a Compact state, do all the nurses already work in PA have to get a new license as a result of that?"

So no, it's not a requirement. So, in PA, for example, PA joined the Compact, but they're currently working through the implementation process. So, sometime in 2023, we hope they will complete the implementation process, and then nurses in PA who want a multi-state license will be able to apply to upgrade their current license from single-state to multi-state.

So those that don't want to do that can stay at a single-state level. So it is really up to a particular nurse in that state, but it's not automatic. All nurses in Pennsylvania won't automatically have a Compact License once it's implemented. Only those that requested that apply for it.

Praise's question is, "Can you hold multiple licenses at a time, one Compact and one for different states simultaneously?" So, that's what we said earlier. So you can only hold one Compact License, right? Because if you held more than one, it's not possible because it's only issued in your state of residency.

So you only need one, right? It would be like holding two drivers driver's licenses from two different states. So, you would always only hold one Compact License. But in addition to that, for example, California is not a Compact state, neither is New York. In addition to your Compact License, you can hold licenses in non-Compact states, as many as you need.

And the second part of your question is, how does CE work with that? So, if the state that issued your Compact License, if they require CE, you would do it for that state. And if those non-Compact states where you were issued a license require CE, then you also need to do it for them.

But within the Compact... I'm going to have to mute everyone again, one second. Within the Compact, you only do it for one state, which is your home state, if they require it. Any other questions?

"What's an example of discipline that would show on the Nursys database?" Well, I would say your license gets suspended, your license is revoked. I think those are the prime examples.

When there's a limitation put on your practice, then that's going to be indicated on the Nursys database. There are some very low levels of discipline which do not become public. In many states, they send the nurse a warning letter saying that, you know, you made this mistake. Maybe it's a medication error, and they ask you to be careful.

Those low-level discipline like that, that's basically a warning. It's, typically, not public information and not on the Nursys database. But if whatever discipline that they took impacts your ability to practice, then you can be assured it will be public information.

McKenzie says, "How long is it estimated for the whole country allows Compact Licenses?" That's anyone's guess. I have no idea. It depends on how fast things move in each state. One of the good things is that the Pandemic has caused states who weren't looking at the Compact to take a second look at it.

And that's why we see states like New York and Nevada and Minnesota all considering the Compact. And that's exactly why we anticipate all the remaining states to try to join in 2023. The thing is, no one has a crystal ball to know if they will be successful with passing the legislation or not. "Are there any states that are likely to not allow it?"

So, it's not that the state doesn't allow it. I think there's support in every state for it, but there's opposition in certain states from nurse unions. So, it really depends if the nurse union is successful in persuading the legislature and the governor to not support it.

That is what everything hinges on in the states where there's opposition. But if we're just talking about support from the nursing population in any state, anywhere from 93% to 98% of nurses want their state to join the Compact. But the thing is that legislators need to vote on it and make a decision on it.

And when they're doing that, they consider whether there's any opposition or not. And the only opposition that exists is in some states is some nursing unions, not all. And I especially say not all because about three weeks ago in Hawaii, the nurse union said, "We support joining the Compact."

So, it's not across the board that they are opposed to it. Any other questions? I don't see any others. If you come up with questions, feel free to send them to nursecompact@ncsbn.org, and we're happy to answer them for you.

We are going to send you the slides immediately after the webinar, in another minute. And that's about it. We'll have another webinar in November, and then we'll take December off, and we'll be back in January to resume our monthly webinars. Thank you very much for joining.

Enjoy the rest of your day. Bye-bye.