



Briefing Paper **HB 1278/SB 5191**

Physical Therapy Licensure Compact

- A compact is a contract between states creating an agreement on a specific issue. The most common compact is the driver's license compact, which allows licensed drivers to drive in all 50 states.
- Health care provider compacts and licenses are more complicated than driver's licenses but they make it a lot easier for licensees to get credentials to practice in multiple states or a temporary home state. Ultimately, it's about access to physical therapy treatment. The compact will help increase access to physical therapy through telehealth, in rural or remote areas, and in understaffed clinics or hospitals.
- They also allow health care practitioners who are military spouses to practice more quickly in a new home state. The average military spouse will move six to nine times over the course of his or her spouse's military career.
- This compact will facilitate multi-state practice while preserving the regulatory authority of the individual states. Each state will retain the independence to withdraw from the compact at any time as well as maintain its own practice standards and practice act.
- If passed in Washington, the physical therapy licensure compact would allow Washington PTs and PTAs to apply for a compact privilege in any of the other states that had also passed the law. Their "home state" license would need to be free of disciplinary action for two years in order for that PT or PTA to be eligible for compact privilege. Compact privileges would also be revoked if disciplinary action occurred at some future date in any of the jurisdictions where a licensee is able to practice. Because of data systems that will be set up to implement the compact, disciplinary data will be more readily available to participating states.
- Licensees would need to know and follow laws in the state in which their patient is located. Scope of practice would not increase for any licensee, even if the compact privilege state allowed an element of practice that was not allowed in the licensee's home state.
- Licensees practicing telehealth would need to practice with the same standards of care provided when a patient is seen in person. Telehealth provided by PTs and PTAs is already legal in Washington.
- There will be no fiscal impact on state budgets because licensees will pay the costs when they choose to apply for compact privileges.
- Once 10 states pass the law, a commission will form to oversee implementation of the law. Four states passed this law in 2016 (Oregon, Missouri, Tennessee and Arizona) and the 10 state threshold is likely to be reached in 2017.
- Obtaining a compact license will be voluntary on the part of the licensee.
- The Washington State Board of Physical Therapy supports this effort.