

# GUNDERSEN HEALTH SYSTEM®

March 26, 2018

The Honorable Joe Shomacker, Chair  
Committee on Health and Human Services Reform  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
509 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Glenn Gruenhagen, Vice Chair  
Committee on Health and Human Services Reform  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
487 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Tina Liebling, Ranking Member  
Committee on Health and Human Services Reform  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
237 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: House File 3848 –Nurse License Compact created**

Dear Chairman Shomacker, Vice-Chair Gruenhagen, Ranking Member Liebling, and members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services Reform:

On behalf of Gundersen Health System, and our over 1,600 licensed nurses, I am pleased to strongly support House File 3848 which enrolls the State of Minnesota in the Interstate Nurse License Compact (NLC). This bill is a positive policy step forward for serving our patients and rural communities throughout southeastern Minnesota.

Gundersen Health System is an integrated healthcare delivery organization located in throughout western Wisconsin, southeastern Minnesota, and northeastern Iowa. Our not-for-profit system includes a tertiary hospital in La Crosse, five critical access hospitals, and over 50 clinics throughout the region. With over 8,000 employees, we are the largest employer in the area providing a range of services including: clinical care, level II trauma care, medical education, and air and ground ambulance services. Gundersen is a recognized Healthgrades Top 50 hospital in overall care, many

Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, Inc. | Gundersen Clinic, Ltd.

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Gundersen Minnesota Locations: Harmony – Houston – La Crescent – Spring Grove – Winona

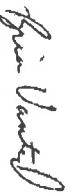
clinical specialty services, and patient experience. We are committed to enriching every life through improved community health, outstanding experience of care, and decreased cost burden.

Under this bill, Minnesota will join nearly 30 others participating in the nurse license compact, including neighboring states. HF 3848 provides greater mobility in meeting the needs of patients and communities, particularly in rural areas. First, the NLC will promote greater efficiency and reduce administrative burden. Nurses practicing at our organization are able to seamlessly provide care for patients along the borders in our neighboring states of Iowa and Wisconsin. Second, nursing telehealth and 24/7 phone advisory services can continue and expand ensuring patients in rural areas do not have to travel significant distances for specialty care. Next, this legislation helps with recruiting and retaining a strong nursing workforce through an expedited administrative process for new hires. This is critical as we continue to experience a high demand for services throughout our system. Finally, should the worst happen, such as a natural disaster, nurses can be dispatched to aid without the need to consider additional emergency licenses. This will assist in removing an unnecessary regulatory hurdle and time consuming burden while accelerating availability of care.

This past fall, local media in southeast Minnesota highlighted the challenges and opportunities with interstate cooperation on nurse licensure. The media segment underscores the realities in providing interstate care in border communities along the Mississippi River.<sup>1</sup> With Minnesota currently not participating in the license compact, a Gundersen Health System nurse explains the administrative challenges as a float nurse providing care across state lines in clinics located in Minnesota.

In sum, nurses are an integral part of the healthcare delivery team, and this bill would substantially improve administration of licensure for our multi-state licensed nurses. Again, on behalf of Gundersen Health System and our 1,600 registered nurses on staff, we strongly support this legislation and thank the committee for holding this hearing today.

Sincerely,



Brian Varnstad, PhD  
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Gundersen Health System  
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<sup>1</sup> New bill makes it easier for nurses to treat patients in multiple states. WXOW (October 9, 2017). Retrieved from: <http://www.wxow.com/story/36556534/2017/10/09/new-bill-makes-it-easier-for-nurses-to-treat-patients-in-multiple-states>



March 26, 2018

Representative Joe Schomacker  
State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
651-296-5505

Dear Representative Schomacker:

On behalf of Allina Health, we would like to offer our strong support for HF 3848/4169, a bill to allow Minnesota to join the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, and thank you for your leadership on this important legislation.

Allina Health is an integrated care delivery system that serves one third of all Minnesotans on their path to health. Of our 27,000 employees, over 8,000 are RN and LPN nurses who help our patients across the care continuum from family medicine to advanced specialty care, including cancer, rehabilitation, heart disease and stroke, and maternal health.

By participating in the enhanced Nurse Licensure Compact, our nurses could practice to the top of their license, meet the expectations of today's mobile patients, and reduce the burdens associated with maintaining separate licenses in multiple states.

- Nurses want to help patients, regardless of where they are located when they need care. They have established relationships with our patients, and holding a multistate license would enable nurses to provide continuity of care and/or telemedicine if a patient travels out of the state for work or vacation.
- Joining the enhanced NLC would help our specialty care nurses continue to monitor and assess patients who are managing a complex illness like cancer, transplant, or cardiac care when the patient relocates for the winter.
- Many of our nurses currently hold licenses in more than one state, which can require additional fees, paperwork, and continuing education requirements, which have not been shown to positively impact the practice of nursing.

In 2017, the Minnesota Board of Nursing released findings from a survey of licensed nurses and their thoughts about Minnesota joining the Nurse Licensure Compact. The survey found that nearly 40% of respondents reported providing nursing services across a state boarder in the previous 24 months, and that more than 80% of respondents were in favor of joining the NLC. These findings are consistent with feedback from our nurses, from direct care staff to those with leadership positions.

*Mailing Address: PO Box 43, Mail Route 10811, Minneapolis, MN 55440-0043*

We support HF 3848/4169 because it would allow our nurses to practice to the top of their license, meet the expectations of today's mobile patients, and reduce the burdens associated with maintaining separate licenses in multiple states. It is a reasonable change that both advances the practice of nursing and maintains strong patient care standards for Minnesota patients.

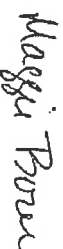
Sincerely,



MariBeth Olson, MA, RN, BC-NE  
VP, Patient Care Services  
Mercy Hospital



Nicole Kveton, RN, MHA  
VP, Patient Care  
Allina Health Group



Maggie Borer, RN, BSN  
Director of Nursing  
Allina Health