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West Virginia 5th State to Enact the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact

Charleston, WV — West Virginia joined four other states this week in enacting the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, which supports medical license portability between states and expands access to health care, particularly to those in underserved areas.

“This important legislation streamlines the process to allow physicians to be licensed in multiples states,” explained Robert C. Knittle, executive director of the West Virginia Board of Medicine. “It doesn’t change our state’s medical practice standards. It simply establishes a voluntary, expedited pathway for physicians to seek medical licenses in multiple states, while ensuring state regulatory oversight necessary to protect patients.”

Knittle said the legislation clarifies that the physician must be licensed in the state where the patient is located. It further affirms that the practice of medicine occurs where the patient is located at the time they are treated by a physician.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin signed the legislation (**HB 2496**) on Tuesday, with an effective date of June 10. The bill had overwhelming, bipartisan support in both the state Senate and House of Delegates, and received strong endorsements from both the West Virginia Board of Medicine and the West Virginia Board of Osteopathic Medicine, as well as the Federation of State Medical Boards.

“This recognizes the realities of modern medicine and the ongoing development of telemedicine and other medical technologies. It’s a common-sense solution that is gaining momentum across the country,” Knittle said. “I’m grateful to the Legislature for its timely and decisive action on this matter, and to the governor for his recognition of the value and potential of the Compact in years to come.”

West Virginia joins Idaho, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming among states that have approved Interstate Compact legislation. To formalize the Compact agreement, it must be enacted in at least seven states or U.S. jurisdictions.

The model Interstate Medical Licensure Compact legislation was developed by a workgroup of medical boards from across the country and released in September 2014. Since then, 17 states have formally introduced the legislation, and nearly 30 state medical and osteopathic boards have publicly expressed support for the concept.

Under the legislation, the Compact will create an Interstate Commission to facilitate multi-state physician licensure for highly qualified physician applicants who meet eligibility criteria. Member states will also be allowed to collaborate on disciplinary matters.

For more information about the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, visit <http://licenseportability.org/>.