

THE OKLAHOMAN

Multi-state licensure to allow doctors to practice across borders



by **PAULA BURKES**

Published: Tue, July 30, 2019 5:00 AM



Oklahoma's legislature recently enacted HB 2351, entering Oklahoma into the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, effective Nov. 1. What is the compact?

The compact is an agreement among more than 25 states that allows qualified physicians to obtain an expedited medical license in any compact-member state.

How do physicians apply for licensure in other states through the compact?

A physician must file an application on the compact website (www.imlcc.org) for an

expedited license with the designated state agency of the physician's state of principal license (SPL) — i.e., a compact-member state where the physician has a medical license which is either the physician's state of residence, location of the physician's employer or where at least 25% of the physician's medical practice occurs. The process is expedited by using each physician's information previously submitted in their SPL. The SPL will verify the physician's information and conduct a new background check. Once qualified, the physician may select any compact-member states for medical licensure. Physicians should consult legal counsel for help with initial applications or application denials.

What are the benefits of the compact?

A physician providing healthcare services to a patient must be licensed in the state where the patient is located. Historically, few physicians had multi-state practices. Therefore, few physicians needed to obtain a medical license in multiple states, a potentially long and expensive process without the compact. Since the advent of telemedicine, however, an

increased number of physicians want to practice in multiple states without traveling. The compact's licensure process makes this easier, which also benefits patients because telemedicine increases access to care and improves health outcomes. Further, the compact strengthens public protection by enhancing the ability of states to share investigative and disciplinary information.

Is multi-state licensure the only requirement to providing healthcare services across state borders via telemedicine?

No. Providing healthcare services across state borders via telemedicine requires compliance with various state and federal laws, which may impose complicated requirements related to location, technology, equipment, medical records, payment, training, evaluation, treatment, informed consent and establishing a physician-patient relationship. Practitioners should obtain legal counsel before providing services via telemedicine to ensure legal compliance. GableGotwals is able to assist with these matters based on its experience counseling health systems, hospitals, clinics, group practices and individual physicians.