

February 12, 2021

To Whom it May Concern;

As Chief Clinical Officer and Senior Vice President of Cross Country Healthcare (CCH), I'd like to share my personal experience with assisting hospitals in need of emergency healthcare staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, and why I believe establishing a nationwide APRN licensure compact is crucial to ensure public health and safety in the future.

Because we are one of the largest healthcare staffing firms in the United States, CCH was called upon to deploy thousands of healthcare professionals throughout the country to provide care to those in need. Our clients pleaded for help as quickly as possible to care for the influx of patients that were arriving at their doorsteps. We received requests from across the United States and all the needs were urgent as many lives were at stake.

In addition to extremely high census, volumes and acuity at these client locations, their own staff members were becoming ill with COVID and many were not able to work. This compounded the burden on overwhelmed hospital staff who were required to cover shifts for sick coworkers while they themselves faced a constant threat of infection. The stress was both physically and mentally exhausting.

Facilities in states with compact RN licensure in place fared better than those without these agreements, as they were able to quickly and easily accept help from out-of-state RNs. Governors of non-compact states needed to issue executive orders, which were often difficult to interpret. This led to additional delays while healthcare leaders and state boards sought clarity, further stressing a healthcare structure that was already at its breaking point.

As one leader told me on the phone, "If I don't have staff here that are qualified to care for the amount of acutely ill patients we have, then patients will die." The pressure of knowing patients needed care urgently yet not being able to deploy staff quickly enough was excruciating. I never want to experience this emotional pain again. We as leaders must do better, and I believe that establishing a nationwide APRN licensure compact can help us do so.

The uniformity of APRN license requirements throughout all states can help ensure public safety during future public health emergencies. This was proven overwhelmingly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now is the time to enhance our ability to help care for one another during the next crisis. A humane response requires the removal of obstacles to providing this care.

Sincerely,

Hank Drummond PhD, RN

Senior Vice President/Chief Clinical Officer
Cross Country Healthcare