

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2223

2/7/2025

Chairman Wobbema and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Amanda Ihmels, RDN, CSO, LRD and I am representing the North Dakota Board of Dietetic Practice, the dietitian licensing board. I am here today to express the boards support for Senate Bill 2223, which proposes North Dakota's adoption of the Dietitian Licensure Compact, as outlined in Chapter 43-44.1 of the North Dakota Century Code.

The proposed compact represents a pivotal step toward advancing dietetic practice and improving access to critical nutrition care across state lines. This legislation is aligned with the mission of the North Dakota Board of Dietetic Practice to protect public health and safety while fostering professional excellence among dietitians.

Senate Bill 2223 achieves several critical objectives:

1. **Expands Access to Nutrition Care:** By allowing dietitians to practice across state lines through a streamlined licensure process, this compact eliminates barriers that currently limit access to medical nutrition therapy and other essential dietetic services. This is particularly beneficial for underserved and rural communities, which often face limited access to healthcare professionals.
2. **Supports Relocating Professionals:** The compact supports military families, including active-duty members and their spouses, by reducing the administrative burdens of obtaining multiple licenses when relocating. This ensures uninterrupted access to dietetic care for these families.
3. **Promotes Consistency and Accountability:** Through uniform licensure requirements and the sharing of licensure and disciplinary information among member states, the compact enhances the ability to hold dietitians accountable while maintaining the highest professional standards.
4. **Advances Telehealth Services:** The compact facilitates the provision of telehealth nutrition services, a rapidly growing area of healthcare delivery. This is particularly significant in states like North Dakota, where geographic challenges can hinder in-person access to care.
5. **Reduces Administrative Burdens:** By eliminating the need for multiple state licenses, this compact decreases costs and administrative complexity for both dietitians and state licensing boards, allowing for more efficient use of resources.

As a regulatory board dedicated to upholding professional standards and protecting public health, we believe this compact empowers our state to enhance the delivery of dietetic services while maintaining robust oversight. This legislation reflects a forward-thinking approach to healthcare, recognizing the evolving needs of our communities and the value of collaborative, multistate solutions.

I urge you to support Senate Bill 2223 and join North Dakota with other states in advancing this important initiative. Adopting the Dietitian Licensure Compact is not only a step toward modernizing licensure but also a commitment to improving the health and well-being of all North Dakotans.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Amanda Ihmels, RDN, CSO, LRD

LRD Chair

North Dakota Board of Dietetic Practice