

2026 JOINT POLICY

HB 1622

2026 JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Policy Committee Pioneer Room, State Capitol

HB 1622
1/21/2026

Relating to the requirements of physician assistants privileged to practice under the physician assistant licensure compact; and to provide an effective date.

2:04 p.m. Co-Chairman Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Co-Chairman Senator Lee, Co-Chairman Ruby, Senators Boschee, Clemens, Cory, Gerhardt, Hogan, Kessel, Myrdal, Powers, Roers, Rummel, Van Oosting, Walen, Weston, Representatives Beltz, Davis, Dobervich, Dressler, Frelich, Heinert, Jonas, Klemin, Novak, Porter, Rohr, Vollmer, Weisz.

Discussion Topics:

- North Dakota Compact Participation
- Critical access hospitals
- Service members eligibility

2:04 p.m. Kristal Fremming, Interim Director of Medical Services at Department of Health and Human Services, testified in favor and submitted testimony #45440.

2:16 p.m. Representative Dressler moved Do Pass.

2:16 p.m. Representative Rohr seconded the motion.

Representatives	
Representative Matt Ruby	Y
Representative Mike Beltz	Y
Representative Jayme Davis	Y
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	Y
Representative Ty Dressler	AB
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Pat Heinert	Y
Representative Jim Jonas	Y
Representative Lawrence Klemin	Y
Representative Anna Novak	Y
Representative Todd Porter	Y
Representative Karen Rohr	Y
Representative Dan Vollmer	Y
Representative Robin Weisz	Y

Motion passed 13-1-0.

Senators	
Senator Judy Lee	Y
Senator Joshua Boschee	Y

Senator David Clemens	Y
Senator Claire Cory	Y
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Greg Kessel	Y
Senator Janne Myrdal	Y
Senator Michelle Powers	Y
Senator Kristin Roers	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	Y
Senator Desiree Van Oosting	Y
Senator Chuck Walen	Y
Senator Kenton Weston	Y

Motion passed 14-0-0.

2:17 p.m. Senator Lee will carry the bill.

2:17 p.m. Representative Dobervich will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Janelle Moos, Associate State Director Advocacy for AARP North Dakota, submitted testimony in favor #45393.

Eniola Soentan, Vice President of Governmental Affairs for North Dakota Student Association, submitted testimony in favor #45424.

2:17 p.m. Co-Chairman Ruby closed the hearing.

Andrew Ficek, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1622 ([25.1385.01000](#))

Joint Policy Committee (Rep. M. Ruby, Co-Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (13 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 1 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1622 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
HB 1622 ([25.1385.01000](#))

Joint Policy Committee (Sen. Lee, Co-Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). HB 1622 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.



House Bill 1622 – Support
January 20, 2026
Joint Policy Committee
Janelle Moos, AARP ND- jmoos@aarp.org

Chair and Members of the Joint Policy Committee,

My name is Janelle Moos, Advocacy Director with AARP North Dakota. AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization with nearly 38 million members. 83,000 of those members live in North Dakota.

Almost one in five Americans reside in rural areas. Residents in rural communities face significant health disparities, and worse health outcomes, across numerous measures and conditions, when compared to urban areas. Lack of access to services is a driver of these disparities. Residents of rural areas also face longer drives to hospitals, as well as hospital closures that leave communities without essential services. All these challenges hit older North Dakotans especially hard as many do not have the mobility, technology, or financial means to obtain care elsewhere. Addressing health care disparities in rural and underserved areas will require a multifaceted approach, and we appreciate you seeking feedback in a variety of areas, related to rural health care.

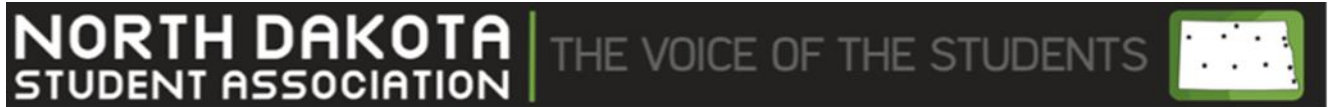
Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 1622. We believe that interstate licensure compacts, such as the Physician Assistant (PA) licensure compact, help mitigate healthcare provider shortages, ensure continuity of care, and improve access to quality healthcare, especially in rural and medically underserved communities.

Adopting interstate licensure compacts, including the PA Interstate Compact, is one action that our state can take to address our healthcare workforce crisis. Licensure compacts eliminate obstacles that can make it more difficult for licensed healthcare professionals to practice in multiple states, allowing for greater flexibility and opportunities. They reduce the time and cost associated with providers obtaining multiple licenses, saving providers months of waiting and significant administrative fees. They also promote the use of telemedicine (a valuable service for rural communities), provide flexibility for providers who live near state lines, and make it easier for military spouses to find employment due to frequent moves.

While licensure compacts alone will not solve our state's healthcare provider shortage, they are an important way for our state to expand access to care and help older adults live comfortably and in good health.

Connecting and investing in the health of residents living in rural communities is critical. We think HB 1622 is an important step forward in helping older North Dakotans remain in their communities as they age, therefore, we urge you to support the bill.

Thank you.



HB 1622

January 21, 2026

Eniola Soetan, North Dakota Student Association

Eniola.soetan@dickinsonstate.edu

Chairs Lee, Ruby, and Members of the Joint Policy Committee,

My name is Eniola Soetan, and I am a delegate of the North Dakota Student Association. I am writing to express my support for HB 1622.

The North Dakota Student Association (NDSA) is a student organization established in 1969 that is dedicated to ensuring that students have a voice in policy that affects Higher Education. The NDSA consists of delegates from each of the 11 public institutions that meet monthly to engage students in Higher Education policy in North Dakota. Our mission is to empower students, foster collaboration between students across campuses in the North Dakota University System, and to advocate on issues of higher education in support of access, affordability, quality, and the student experience.

The North Dakota Student Association is committed to protecting the rights and safety of all NDUS students, as is evidenced in our [2025-2027 biennium legislative priorities](#). Every student deserves to have reasonable access to healthcare, and the proposed physician assistant licensure compact would ensure that there is more access across our state and nearby states to the crucial services of physician assistants.

Recognizing the importance of licensure compacts in eliminating barriers and creating access, last year the NDSA passed [NDSA-14-2425: A Resolution in Support of Interstate Licensure Compacts](#). Not only does SB 1622 reduce barriers of access to care for our North Dakota residents, but it also reduces barriers for residents of nearby states who wish to study and practice in the state of North Dakota. According to a peer-reviewed journal article by MollyMaeve Musk^[1], interstate licensure compacts allow people to work in career paths and

areas that otherwise would have been relatively inaccessible to them; when we talk about things like reducing our workforce shortages, any initiative that has the ability to increase career pathway access and therefore increase the number of people working in a particular career goes a very long way. When we talk about this in the context of healthcare jobs, these workforce increases have the potential to literally be lifesaving.

Support for HB 1622 would expand the innovative and collaborative efforts of other interstate licensure compacts that came through last legislative session, such as the compact for dietitians and occupational therapists. Healthcare is a whole team effort, with people more often requiring multiple different healthcare services in order to achieve their full health and wellness needs. While we do the work of reducing the physician assistant shortage in-state, it is also important for us to remain proactive and to provide pathways for people to access this important healthcare right now, and an interstate licensure compact is one very helpful and practical way to do so.

To support increased access to healthcare access for the 45,000 students served by the NDSA, create more opportunities and access to practice as a physician assistant in North Dakota, and to incentivize physician assistant practice in North Dakota for individuals in nearby states who otherwise would not be able to practice here, I would like to express my support for HB 1622, and on behalf of the NDSA ask for a DO PASS recommendation on HB 1622 from the joint committee.

[1]- Lusk M. 2023. The Role of Interstate Compacts in Modernizing the Healthcare Workforce. Policy Perspective 14(1):81-4. [The Role of Interstate Compacts in Modernizing the Healthcare Workforce - Journal of Nursing Regulation](#)

Testimony
House Bill No. 1622
Joint Policy Committee
Representative Matthew Ruby and Senator Judy Lee, Co-Chairman
January 21, 2026

Chairman Ruby and Chairman Lee, and members of the Joint Policy Committee, I am Krista Fremming, Interim Director of Medical Services with the Department of Health and Human Services. I appear before you in support of Senate Bill No. 1622 to join the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact, which was introduced as part of North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation Program.

Physician Assistants (PAs) fill a critical gap in healthcare delivery across North Dakota. They are essential in addressing provider shortages, particularly in rural and underserved areas. By joining the PA Licensure Compact, North Dakota will make it easier for qualified physician assistants to practice here, thereby increasing access to quality healthcare for our residents.

This compact is designed to strengthen access to medical services while maintaining patient safety, allowing PAs to practice across state lines through mutual recognition of licensure. Preventative measures and oversight are in place to ensure appropriate and safe medical practice in line with PA licensure. It also supports military families by enabling portability of licenses for active-duty personnel and their spouses.

This bill was supported by the interim Rural Health Transformation Committee and incorporated into North Dakota's Rural Health Transformation application where the state was awarded points and approximately \$3.48 million in funding over the 5-year grant based on the intention to pass this legislation. Following through on this commitment is vital to uphold the integrity of the application and advance our shared goal of improving healthcare access statewide.

Joining the PA Compact will position North Dakota as a leader in modernizing healthcare workforce mobility, reducing administrative barriers, and ensuring timely care for patients. I urge the committee to support House Bill No. 1622 and help us take this important step toward improving health outcomes for all North Dakotans.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to try to answer any questions the committee may have.