

SB 225 – Interstate Compact for Recognition of Emergency Personnel Licensure

Chairman Ostmeyer and members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 225 – an interstate compact for the recognition of EMS personnel licensure/certification.

As you are aware, the EMS Board is the state regulatory agency responsible for oversight of the EMS systems, both services and personnel, and educational programs pertaining to EMS. Our Board's purpose is to protect and promote the welfare of the citizens of Kansas through the efficient and effective regulation of EMS and to ensure that quality out-of-hospital care is available throughout the state.

Our Board supports this important piece of legislation. It allows better protection to one of our most valuable resources, our Kansas EMS providers; it realigns the focus on access to emergency patient care; and it reduces cost and confusion to our Kansas EMS providers who may otherwise need to maintain their licensure/certification in multiple jurisdictions.

EMS Provider Protection

In 2015, Kansas ground ambulance services were requested and responded to approx. 2400 calls outside of the state of Kansas. Most, if not all, states require that those providing care within their jurisdictional boundary hold licensure or certification within that state. All of these responses were generated from a request by an ambulance service in another state for the Kansas service to assist, most typically through a mutual aid agreement between the two entities.

The mutual aid agreement may allow for the ambulance **service** to respond into the other jurisdiction, but it does not change or waive the fact that the **provider** must still hold licensure or certification in that jurisdiction in order to legally provide emergency medical care. This compact extends that protection by stating that the provider may legally provide emergency medical care in that other jurisdiction if, 1) they are requested; 2) they function under their local service medical protocols (or under the supervision of a medical director); 3) they possess a current unrestricted license/certification in their home state; and 4) they are 18 years of age or older.

Realigns Focus on Access to Emergency Patient Care

This compact recognizes that all but 3 states utilize the same examination for initial licensure/certification. All of our immediately surrounding states utilize the same examination as Kansas for initial licensure/certification at the EMT and Paramedic levels.

In some of the instances for response, a Kansas ambulance service is requested because they are the closest ambulance service to the patient in need. Our Board believes that the ability to receive timely and adequate patient care should not be

impeded by a state line/boundary when the requirements for initial certification in both jurisdictions are the same.

Reduced Cost/Confusion

Most, if not all, ambulance services that cross state boundaries on a more frequent basis require their personnel to become licensed or certified within that jurisdiction, typically based upon state laws in neighboring jurisdictions. This requires the EMS provider to not only gain licensure/certification in another jurisdiction, but to maintain that licensure/certification. Most states charge a fee for licensure/certification and have specific continuing education requirements in order to maintain that licensure/certification.

This compact allows those that cross state boundaries, in the course of their daily duty, to not necessarily gain or maintain licensure/certification in that other jurisdiction; thereby saving the individual the cost of maintaining that other state licensure/certification and minimizing the confusion caused by having to be knowledgeable of, and follow, separate rules for each jurisdiction.

This compact, as written, has already been enacted in Colorado and Texas (2 of the 5 states that Kansas ambulance services responded to in 2015). All our remaining surrounding states qualify to enact this compact and have stated their desire to pursue passage during their respective legislative sessions. Our Board wishes to be within the first 10 states to enact in order to have a seat on the commission during the initial promulgation of rules. We feel that this ensures that Kansas' voice is heard from the very beginning.

In closing, the emergency medical services board feels strongly that passage of SB 225 allows better protection for our Kansas EMS providers while ensuring that timely access and adequate patient care remains as the focus. I would be more than happy to address any questions you may have.