

Testimony before Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
HB2453 – Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact
Jessica Thomas – The Council of State Governments (CSG)
Virtual Testimony in Support

Chairwoman Gossage and members of the Committee

My name is Jessica Thomas, I'm a Policy Analyst at The Council of State Governments. My testimony is meant to provide educational information on the compact, HB2453. The Council of State Governments, or CSG, is a membership-based nonprofit serving all three branches of state governments, of which all state elected officials are members. Through technical assistance, research, and convenings, CSG seeks to help states solve mutual issues. CSG has been a part of the development of all 16 active licensure compacts.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense, CSG has developed the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact language with stakeholders within these professions including ADA and ADHA. The compact will enable dentists and dental hygienists to get authorization to practice in states that join the compact.

The compact benefits military families. If a military family gets assigned to a new duty station in a compact member state, the service member or their spouse can continue to work via the compact.

A dentist or dental hygienist must first hold an active, unencumbered license in a compact member state to be eligible to apply for a compact privilege. Practitioners must also pass a background check and meet other eligibility requirements related to education and examinations. The dentist or dental hygienist must pass the national boards examinations as well as a clinical assessment. Even if the state they come from does not require a clinical assessment, the practitioner must pass one to use the compact.

From a regulatory perspective, the compact preserves the authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. A licensee practicing under a compact privilege must abide by the laws, regulations and rules that govern the practice of dentistry or dental hygiene in the state in which they are located. The scope of practice does not change. Kansas has jurisdiction over anyone practicing in Kansas under the compact.

Once in effect, an interstate licensure data system will be established that will contain licensure information and investigative and disciplinary information. This allows participating states to see information on those practicing within their state. In our experience with other compacts, the fiscal impact on the state is very minimal or non-existent. Kansas will be able to charge a fee for the compact privilege. This can be used to offset any potential fees.

Like all the other occupational licensing compacts Kansas has joined, the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact will be governed by a commission made up of the member states. The delegate will be a representative from Kansas's state licensing authority.

The compact will come into effect once it's enacted by seven states. The compact has been enacted in five states, Iowa, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. It has pending legislation in 12 states, including Colorado, Nebraska, and Missouri.