



Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association

A CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

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Marklein's PT Compact bill would increase patient access to health care

Madison, WI: Today, legislative leaders took a step towards increasing access to healthcare in Wisconsin by holding a public hearing on AB 438, legislation to create a Physical Therapy Licensure Compact. Led by Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and Representative Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond), this bill will reduce the red tape of obtaining multiple licenses when practicing physical therapy across state lines, while preserving Wisconsin's authority to protect the citizens of the state.

Like the nursing and medical compacts that have already passed in Wisconsin, this compact will allow Wisconsin to rapidly respond to the needs of an increasingly mobile society and improve access to care. The compact creates the ability for a physical therapist (PT) or physical therapist assistant (PTA) to seek compact privileges if they want to move around to see patients in underserved areas or work across state lines in border areas.

“Passage of the Compact will help patients in rural areas by giving them greater access to licensed physical therapists (PTs) and physical therapist assistants (PTAs),” explained Connie Kittleson, Wisconsin Physical Therapy Association's (WPTA) past president. “Decreasing the regulatory burden for cross-state practice enables PTs and PTAs to more easily fulfill the needs in both urban and rural areas that lack adequate practitioners.”

The Compact would also significantly benefit military families. When members of our nation's military receive permanent change of station orders, there is a significant administrative burden for their spouses as they seek licensure in a new state. Many military spouses pursue careers in healthcare fields such as physical therapy because these careers are portable. However, the challenge of obtaining and renewing licensure in multiple states without the existence of an interstate compact is challenging.

“Given that military families move 6-9 times over the course of the service member's military career, the burden is significant,” stated Brett Roberts, WPTA Legislative Chair. “The Compact would ease that burden for military spouses as well as for service members who would like to deliver pro bono care outside of their military service.”

Also, as healthcare begins to incorporate more delivery of care via telemedicine, portability of licensure will become increasingly important. The Compact can make this process less cumbersome and allow for greater access to modern methods of healthcare delivery. PT's and PTA's will be subject to standard background checks and fingerprinting to ensure quality and safety in patient care.

With passage of the Compact, Wisconsin will still preserve its regulatory authority protecting the citizens of our state. A person practicing with a Compact Privilege would practice under the laws of the state in which the patient is located. PTs and PTAs in remote states practicing with a



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Compact Privilege in Wisconsin would be held accountable to the same laws and standards as PTs and PTAs whose primary license is in Wisconsin.

“On behalf of the thousands of physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students practicing to become licensed PT’s or PTA’s, we greatly appreciate the leadership of Sen. Marklein and Rep. Stafsholt to put forth legislation that will increase patient access to physical therapy while ensuring patient safety,” said Dennis Kaster, WPTA President. “We are hopeful that this legislation will pass in this session.”

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