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October 20, 2021

Submitted electronically via email.

The Honorable John J. Lawn, Jr., Chair
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
24 Beacon Street, Room 236
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Cindy F. Friedman, Chair
Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
24 Beacon Street, Room 208
Boston, MA 02133

RE: H. 1284, An Act relative to nurse licensure compact in Massachusetts and S. 163, An Act relative to nurse licensure compacts

Dear Chair Friedman and Chair Lawn:

The Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals, on behalf of our 12 member hospitals, appreciates the opportunity to provide written comment in support of **H. 1284, An Act relative to nurse licensure compact in Massachusetts and S. 163, An Act relative to nurse licensure compacts**. We appreciate you holding a hearing this week on this important legislation and urge the Committee to give it a favorable report. If adopted, Massachusetts would become the 39th jurisdiction to join the national Nurse Licensure Compact, improving access to health care in the Commonwealth and supporting the critical nursing profession.

The national Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allows registered nurses and licensed practical nurses to hold a single, multistate license based in their state of residence. This license grants the provider the privilege to practice in their home state, as well as the other NLC member states. The NLC operates on a mutual recognition model, creating a streamlined and safe process for nurses to practice in all of the compact member states. By joining the compact, Massachusetts would increase access to qualified nurses, bolster the availability of health care services, and improve the Commonwealth's response to emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to shine a spotlight on the acute health care staffing needs of the Commonwealth. Even without the strains of an ongoing need for acute hospital beds due to COVID-19 and other factors, our hospitals and emergency rooms are being pushed to the limits by an ongoing behavioral health crisis, more acutely ill patients, and a workforce that has been stretched to capacity. Health care providers at every level are facing unprecedented levels of stress and burnout in addition to the previously projected shortages. Joining the NLC would significantly increase the number of nurses who are eligible to practice in Massachusetts. And as adoption of telehealth has increased, the compact would improve the ability of Massachusetts nurses to provide telehealth services across state lines.

From a safety perspective, the compact ensures that nursing care provided by compact members is high quality. When practicing under the compact, nurses practicing in Massachusetts are subject to

all of the Commonwealth's laws and regulations related to the practice of nursing. Additionally, updates to the compact ensure that those with a felony conviction are prohibited from receiving a multistate license.

Massachusetts' health care workforce needs are more acute than ever, and we strongly urge the legislature to take this essential step toward improving access to high quality nursing care in the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. COBTH is also a member of the Nursing Licensure Compact Coalition and strongly supports the in-depth comments provided by that coalition, as well as the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with any questions or if we can provide additional information on these or other matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patricia McMullin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "M".

Patricia McMullin
Executive Director
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals