

House Committee of Corporations
State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Elizabeth F Winthrop, MS, RDN

Support for H 5067 - DIETITIAN LICENSURE COMPACT

Hearing: Tuesday Feb 4, 2025

Dear Chairman Solomon and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth (Beth) Winthrop and I am a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (dietitian) from Newport, RI. I testify in strong support of H 5067, Dietitian Licensure Compact, which would decrease the administrative burden required for dietitians to be licensed in multiple states.

For 27 years, I served as the clinical nutrition manager for the Southcoast system. I managed 42 registered dietitians in ambulatory clinics as well as in-patient clinical roles. Given our geography, nearly half of my dietitian employees were from Rhode Island, and it took careful tracking to ensure that each dietitian met state-specific rules and regulations. Recruiting, training, ensuring continuing education, and performance appraisals would have been more streamlined had H5067 been in place. For the previous 10 years, I have also taught graduate courses at the University of Rhode Island with students from all over the country.

Also for the past 10 years, I've been working first with Sodexo, now with MenuTrinfo on college campuses. As you may know, eating disorders are prevalent in the college age group, and it takes time, sometimes years, for these students to develop a trusting and productive relationship with their dietitian. Having to leave this person and find a new clinician in another state can damage the health of these fragile patients, and not infrequently lead to them dropping out. These are not the only college students with ongoing therapeutic relationships with dietitians. Students with multiple severe food allergies, those with significant gastrointestinal problems, those requiring tube-feeding or insulin pumps, all benefit from consistency in their care givers.

This compact would benefit both patients and dietitians. It benefits patients as it allows them to continue working with their current dietitian via telehealth instead of being forced to change providers when they move or when their dietitian moves. It also benefits dietitians who must move frequently as a result of their spouse's profession. I was fortunate to supervise a number of dietitians who were Navy wives from Newport, and would have been able to access others if the process was less lengthy. This compact would reduce the difficulty of their move, allow them to continue their work with less interruption and allow them to continue seeing patients from their previous state after they move via telehealth. COVID showed us that we needed telehealth, and that we could provide effective care. In the current system, dietitians licensed in multiple states have to keep track of the timing of renewal, fee payment methods and differing continuing education requirements for each state, creating a high administrative burden and taking away important time from patient care.

This compact would decrease the burden to become qualified to practice in multiple states and expand access to nutrition care to Rhode Island patients. I respectfully ask for your support of **House Bill 5067, the Dietitian Licensure Compact**.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I would also like to thank you on behalf of my current and future patients.

Elizabeth F. Winthrop, MS, RD
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