

Statement in Support of the Interstate Dietitian Compact (HB 2070)

As a Registered Dietitian working in obesity care, I have seen firsthand how access to licensed Registered Dietitians is critical, especially with the rise of GLP-1 medications like Ozempic and the growing availability of telehealth services to obtain them. These medications are powerful tools in the treatment of obesity and related chronic diseases, but they are FDA-approved with proper nutrition - we need adequate access to qualified practitioners who know chronic disease, nutrition, and behavior therapy to ensure safe and effective medication therapy. Patients taking these medications need ongoing support from licensed dietitians to ensure they are receiving adequate nutrition, managing side effects, and making sustainable lifestyle changes—otherwise, the medications are ineffective at best or dangerous at worst cause malnutrition, muscle loss, or bone loss.

I currently hold licenses in Kansas, Missouri, and Texas, and while I would love to provide care to patients in other states who need my expertise, current licensing barriers make that nearly impossible. If a patient from another state wishes to work with me remotely, I have to decline care because obtaining another state license is a lengthy and burdensome process. Each new application requires transcripts, verification from every state where I've ever held a license, notarized paperwork, and more—all of which take time away from my current patients. Even if I were to go through the process, the wait time for licensure could mean a critical gap in care for someone taking a medication that directly impacts their nutritional needs.

Meanwhile, that same patient can easily access unqualified nutrition advice online from individuals who are not held to the same professional and ethical standards as licensed dietitians. Without proper regulations in place, patients may receive misinformation that could lead to nutrient deficiencies, muscle loss, or adverse side effects—all of which could have been prevented with timely, evidence-based nutrition therapy from a qualified professional.

The Interstate Dietitian Compact is a solution that will increase patient access to licensed dietitians across multiple states while maintaining high professional standards. By allowing states to recognize one another's licensing requirements, qualified dietitians can quickly obtain licensure in compact states, reducing administrative burdens and ensuring patients have timely access to evidence-based care.

For patients utilizing GLP-1 medications, managing chronic diseases, or seeking medical nutrition therapy, access to a licensed dietitian is essential—and the Dietitian Compact is a critical step toward making that access a reality.

I strongly urge policymakers and stakeholders to support this compact to ensure that patients receive the safe, effective, and evidence-based nutrition care they deserve.