



**For Immediate Release: April 23, 2013**

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## **Federation of State Medical Boards to Explore Use of Interstate Compact for Physician Licensure**

DALLAS – The House of Delegates of the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) has approved a resolution calling for the FSMB to formally explore the creation of a new system that would utilize an “interstate compact” to increase efficiency in the licensing of physicians who practice in multiple states. The FSMB House passed the resolution unanimously during its Annual Meeting on April 20 in Boston.

Interstate compacts are formal agreements between states that have been successfully utilized to help state governments facilitate a wide range of activities that cross state lines, eliminating the need for federal intervention. Regulation of the health professions is mandated to the states by the 10th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The House resolution calls for the FSMB to convene representatives of state medical boards and other experts by July of this year to study the practical implications of a medical licensing compact. Such an agreement could be used to help facilitate multi-state practice and enable telemedicine, while ensuring that state boards would retain their individual authority for discipline and oversight within the system.

With the expanded use of telemedicine, the practice of medicine across state lines is expected to increase in coming years – especially in rural areas of the United States. Physician licensing is administered separately by each state and U.S. territory, and those who seek more than one license currently must navigate through multiple licensure processes. These processes could be streamlined through the use of an interstate compact.

“One of the most important consensus points that we continue to hear in discussions of possible models for medical licensure is that they should be state-based,” said Humayun J. Chaudhry, DO, President and CEO of the FSMB. “Most policy experts agree state authority ensures the best assurance of patient protection in physician licensing – which remains our number one priority.”

“An interstate compact could address the need for efficiency and speed in licensing, while not compromising the inherent value of a state-based system, and most importantly, patient safety,” he added.

The House action is the latest in a series of action steps the FSMB has taken in recent years in an effort to better accommodate the needs of physicians who practice across state lines. In January of this year, representatives of 48 state and territorial boards gathered for a special summit meeting in Dallas to discuss various licensing models that could be adopted, with the interstate compact emerging as the most feasible.

Wyoming Board of Medicine Executive Director Kevin Bohnenblust, JD, who participated in the January meeting and whose state sponsored the House of Delegates resolution, called the development “a strong step forward.”

“More than 75 percent of the physicians who are licensed in Wyoming are licensed in another state, yet only about 40 percent of our licensees live in Wyoming,” he said. “States like ours, with patients who live in small and sometimes remote communities, rely on physicians who do not reside here. We are excited with this development.”

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#### **About the FSMB**

The FSMB is a national non-profit organization representing all medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. It assists these state and territorial medical boards as they go about their mandate of protecting the public’s health, safety and welfare. The FSMB leads by promoting excellence in medical practice, licensure, and regulation. For more information, please visit [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org).