ISSUE BRIEF:
Advocating for interstate medical licensure

MMA POSITION:
Medical licensure should remain state-based because that protects public safety and fosters high professional standards. Yet, medicine is changing, and often physicians want or need to maintain licensure in multiple states concurrently. The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact would maintain state-based licensure, but it also would expedite licensure in other compact states for physicians who meet a stringent set of qualifications. The MMA believes this compact creates a valuable option for physicians who want or need to be licensed in multiple states. The MMA supports HF 321, authored by Rep. Tara Mack, and SF 253, authored by Sen. Kathy Sheran. This legislation would enable Minnesota to join the compact.

BACKGROUND:
The compact is a proposed alternative to a small-but-strong movement to nationalize medical licensure. It would retain state-based licensure and is essentially a contract between states. In order for a compact to be established, member states must each adopt the same piece of legislation endorsing it. Participation is voluntary, and the compact will not become effective until seven states join it through legislation.

Once the compact is established, a commission will be created to provide oversight. Each state that joins the compact will appoint two people to the commission as voting members. The commission will be accountable not to the federal government but rather to the member states. The commission will act as a clearinghouse only; medical licensure will always originate from the states.

The compact will not alter Minnesota’s Medical Practice Act. Physicians who are interested in expedited licensure through the compact may choose that route or they may apply for licensure in the traditional fashion directly to the Board of Medical Practice.

MMA members overwhelmingly support the compact, which was conceived of and drafted by the Federation of State Medical Boards, the association that serves the 70 state medical boards. Legislation introduced at the Capitol is also supported by the Minnesota Board of Medical Practice, the Minnesota Hospital Association, Mayo Clinic, Allina Clinics, Gunderson Lutheran, Essentia Health, Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare and Sanford Health.

TALKING POINTS:
- Medical licensure must remain state-based in order to protect patient safety and uphold professional standards.
- Increasingly, physicians wish to become licensed in multiple states or need to change licensure on short notice.
- Compacts are a constitutionally authorized way for states to work together without interference from the federal government.
- The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact would not alter Minnesota’s Medical Practice Act.
- The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact would establish expedited licensure opportunities for physicians without sacrificing state oversight.