

# POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR THE PANDEMIC

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## POLICY MEMO: UNIVERSAL OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING RECIPROCITY WILL STRENGTHEN OHIO'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM APRIL 20, 2020

### **The Buckeye Institute's Recommendation**

Ohio should join the **Interstate Medical Licensure Compact** and then remove additional barriers to medical care by adopting **universal occupational license reciprocity**.

### **Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the importance of flexibility, preparedness, and the supply of medical professionals during a widespread health crisis. Like all states, Ohio licenses many medical professions, but places **additional restrictions** on doctors, physician assistants, nurses, and other medical professionals licensed in other states that limit the care they may provide here.

Even Governor DeWine's recent telehealth expansion that **adopted** one of Buckeye's earliest pandemic-response **recommendations** remains hampered by needless occupational licensing and certification requirements despite the fact that **Medicare Advantage** expanded telehealth coverage last year and the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services** allows hospitals to rely on professionals with out-of-state licenses for telehealth services. These sorts of red-tape requirements make Ohio less flexible, less prepared, and less ready to care for Ohioans, especially during public health crises like the current pandemic.

Ohio should take two steps to address this concern and improve its available health care. First, joining the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact would make it easier for licensed out-of-state health care practitioners to obtain an Ohio license—a welcome change. But even the compact would leave certain employment barriers in place and require practitioners from other states to go through Ohio's medical board and pay fees before caring for Ohioans. Second, the universal occupational license reciprocity that Buckeye has **recommended** would allow medical and other professionals to cross state lines more easily and permit Ohio professionals with out-of-state licenses to help their fellow Ohioans immediately.

### **Conclusion**

As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, Ohio should immediately join the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact and then adopt universal occupational license reciprocity to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and make Ohio's health care system more flexible, prepared, and capable of caring for those in need.