

March 1, 2016

The Honorable Mike Shirkey, Chairman, *and*  
Members of the Senate Health Policy Committee  
Senate Hearing Room, Boji Tower  
Lansing, MI 48933

**Re: AARP support for House Bill 4583**

Dear Chairman Shirkey and Members of the Committee,

We are writing on behalf of AARP Michigan to express our support for House Bill 4583 (Tedder), which would include the State of Michigan in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact.

AARP members have a significant interest in passage of the Compact, which would create an expedited and less administratively burdensome process for physicians seeking licensure in multiple states.

Patients in underserved areas in our state often have difficulty accessing care due to physician shortages and lack of specialists within a drivable distance. **Adopting the Compact is a commonsense way to allow qualified physicians to more readily provide care in multiple states, facilitating both in-person care and the growing use of telehealth technology.**

AARP recognizes that telehealth offers promising opportunities to help people access health care in new ways and to make it easier for family caregivers to care for their loved ones. For one thing, transportation to medical appointments is often an obstacle for older adults. Telehealth technologies can allow older adults and their family caregivers to consult with doctors and better manage their health without taking a trip to the doctor's office every time.

Our state's participation in the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact would also make it more likely that "snowbirds" who live part of the year in Michigan and part of the year in another state will be able to keep the same doctor all year round.

The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact comes at a critical time as demand for primary care services is projected to increase through 2020, with aging and population growth accounting for an 81% change in demand.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, shortages of specialists can compromise patient care and drive up the cost of health care. For example, there is a shortage of geriatricians in the United States, with fewer than four certified geriatricians in the United States per 10,000

individuals 75 years of age or older.<sup>ii</sup> Hospital stays for patients receiving care from a geriatrician were about a day shorter on average than the stays for non-geriatrician's patients, resulting in a \$900 difference in the cost of hospital stays.<sup>iii</sup>

In short, AARP supports HB 4583 as a way to encourage physicians to practice in multiple states, remove an administrative barrier to the use of telemedicine, improve patient access to care and improve health outcomes. We appreciate this opportunity to share our comments and our support for this legislation. If you have questions or if there is further information we can provide, please feel free to contact Melissa Seifert at 517.267.8934 or [MSeifert@AARP.org](mailto:MSeifert@AARP.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Lisa Dedden Cooper  
Manager of Advocacy



Melissa Seifert  
Associate State Director, Government Affairs

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<sup>i</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, National Center for Health Workforce Analysis. *Projecting the supply and demand for primary care practitioners through 2020*. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013.

<sup>ii</sup> American Geriatrics Society. *What are the current and projected future doctor to patient ratios in geriatrics?* [http://www.americangeriatrics.org/advocacy\\_public\\_policy/gwps/gwps\\_faqs/id:3188](http://www.americangeriatrics.org/advocacy_public_policy/gwps/gwps_faqs/id:3188)

<sup>iii</sup> Sorbero, M. E., Saul, M. I., Liu, H. and Resnick, N. M. (2012), Are geriatricians more efficient than other physicians at managing inpatient care for elderly patients? *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 60: 869–876.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan 501(c)(4) social welfare organization that advocates on issues that matter the most to people age 50 and over, and their families. AARP has approximately 1.4 million members in Michigan. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates.