

Health and Human Services Committee

LB 258

March 5, 2015

**Dr. Joseph Acierno, Chief Medical Officer
Division of Public Health
Department of Health and Human Services**

Good afternoon Senator Campbell and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Dr. Joseph Acierno (J-O-S-E-P-H A-C-I-E-R-N-O). I am the Chief Medical Officer and Director of the Division of Public Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, and I am currently serving as acting CEO for the agency.

I am here today to offer neutral testimony regarding LB 258.

LB 258 creates a new expedited license for physicians under the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact. This Compact differs from others in that it does not allow practice in multiple states based on one license. The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact creates a process that allows physicians to become licensed in multiple states. The Compact sets a standard that physicians must meet to be eligible for the expedited license. After receiving an expedited license through the Compact, a physician can then apply for expedited licensure in another Compact state.

In recent years, there has been national attention initiated by representatives in the federal government in support of pursuing a national license for physicians. As technology for the practice of telemedicine has advanced, issues have been raised regarding the mobility of physicians and the portability of physician licenses. In an effort to avoid national licensure, the Federation of State Medical Boards has worked with states to pursue the concept of a Compact for medical licensure. Seven states must pass legislation for the Compact to become effective. Nebraska is one of 15 states that have introduced legislation this year to enact the Compact.

There have been a number of technical issues identified with this bill and we have spoken with Senator Nordquist regarding those issues. For instance, for the eligibility requirement for medical education does not indicate how many years of graduate medical education must be completed or whether the completion of a residency program is required. It is also unclear what cost will be paid by the member states and it appears that the Interstate Commission appears to control fees. These are just a few of the technical issues that arise from this bill. It is essential that the Department of Health and Human Services retains the ability to regulate the practice of medicine in Nebraska and to take appropriate disciplinary action against physicians who provide medical services to patients in this state and that the state continue to generate fees for licensing that will sustain related programs without causing large increases in fees to providers to support such an approach.

I would be happy to answer any questions.