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for Respiratory Care
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Representative Paul W. Lee
Chair, House Health Committee
Alabama House of Representatives
11 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130

Letter of Support for Alabama State HB 336
Testimony in Support of the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact (RCIC)

Dear Representative Paul Lee, and members of the House Health Committee,

On behalf of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC), I am pleased to offer this letter in strong support of Alabama House Bill 336, which seeks to establish the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact (RCIC). The AARC, representing over 45,000 licensed respiratory care professionals nationwide, is committed to advancing access to high-quality respiratory care and fostering innovation in our field.

The RCIC represents a transformative opportunity to address systemic challenges in respiratory care delivery. As healthcare systems increasingly operate regionally and across state lines, current licensure systems create unnecessary barriers that hinder the deployment of respiratory therapists, particularly in times of crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic and recent natural disasters have illustrated the urgent need for a streamlined, responsive licensure system that allows respiratory therapists to provide care where it is most needed.

The Benefits of the RCIC

Ensuring Timely Access to Life-Saving Expertise

Respiratory therapists play a critical role in managing ventilators, non-invasive respiratory support, and emergency airway interventions. By simplifying licensure processes, the RCIC ensures that patients—whether in rural Alabama communities or during public health emergencies—receive care from qualified therapists without unnecessary delays.



Improving Chronic Disease Management

Millions of Americans live with chronic lung diseases such as COPD, asthma, and pulmonary fibrosis. Respiratory therapists are essential in not only treating these conditions but also educating and empowering patients through disease management strategies. The RCIC would enhance continuity of care, especially for patients who travel across state lines or relocate.

Enhancing Neonatal and Pediatric Care

For Alabama's smallest and most vulnerable patients, respiratory therapists provide specialized interventions, including surfactant administration, mechanical ventilation, and oxygen therapy. The RCIC ensures that families in underserved or remote areas have access to this critical expertise, reducing disparities in neonatal and pediatric outcomes.

Supporting Post-Acute and Home-Based Care

With the growing demand for home healthcare and post-acute care services, respiratory therapists are increasingly providing care in non-traditional settings. The RCIC supports this shift by allowing therapists to work across state boundaries, ensuring patients managing conditions such as sleep apnea, chronic respiratory failure, or pulmonary rehabilitation receive consistent, high-quality care.

The RCIC's Broader Impacts

Strengthening Alabama's Public Health Response

The RCIC will create a robust framework for rapidly mobilizing respiratory care professionals in response to public health emergencies. It will eliminate delays caused by licensure restrictions, ensuring faster, more effective interventions in disaster-stricken or resource-limited areas.

Reducing Healthcare Disparities

Rural and underserved communities often face workforce shortages in respiratory care. By simplifying licensure across state lines, the RCIC helps Alabama's rural hospitals and clinics access respiratory therapists, reducing disparities in care and improving outcomes.

Improving Patient-Centered Care

Patients benefit from continuity of care, particularly when relocating for work, education, or personal reasons. The RCIC ensures that patient transitions across state lines do not disrupt critical respiratory treatments, reducing administrative burdens on both providers and patients.



Aligning Alabama with National Best Practices

The RCIC follows the model of successful healthcare licensure compacts in nursing, physical therapy, and other allied health professions. These compacts have demonstrated their ability to enhance workforce mobility, improve patient access to care, and reduce regulatory burdens without compromising the quality of care or state sovereignty.

The AARC is actively partnering with the Council of State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts and the Department of Defense to ensure the RCIC's successful development and implementation. We are committed to providing educational resources, engaging stakeholders, and supporting legislative efforts to advance this forward-thinking policy.

The establishment of the RCIC is a necessary step forward to modernize the delivery of respiratory care in Alabama and nationwide. By supporting HB 336, Alabama can lead in improving patient access to skilled respiratory therapists, enhancing health outcomes, and building a more resilient healthcare workforce.

We urge the committee to advance this vital legislation. The AARC stands ready to assist in its implementation and is available to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

Miriam O'Day
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs
American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC)