



Respiratory Care Interstate Compact

State Advocacy Toolkit

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Respiratory Care Interstate Compact Advocacy Guide

The Respiratory Care Interstate Compact Advocacy Guide provides information for stakeholders that are interested in the introduction or passage of a bill for their state to join the compact.

Guide Objectives

- To encourage and mobilize key stakeholders in the respiratory therapy community/state affiliates who will champion the compact with their legislators.
- To launch the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact advocacy strategy to promote the legislation
- To mobilize resources to support state affiliates' work on the ground.

What is the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact?

The Respiratory Care Interstate Compact (RCIC) is an interstate occupational licensure compact. Interstate compacts are constitutionally authorized, legally binding, and legislatively enacted contracts among states. The RCIC seeks to provide licensees with opportunities for interstate practice and increase mobility for individuals who are relocating, improve public safety, and promote workforce development by reducing unnecessary licensure burdens.

Project Background

In September of 2020, the Council of State Governments (CSG) began working with the Department of Defense (DoD) as part of a cooperative agreement to develop new interstate licensure compacts. The respiratory therapy profession was selected for compact development technical assistance after a competitive process and successful application from the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC). CSG, in partnership with the DoD and AARC, facilitated the development of the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact (RCIC), which is now available for enactment in the states.

More information on the development, function, and current state of RCIC can be found [here](#) or [here](#).

Overview of the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact

Compact Status

The Respiratory Care Interstate Compact (RCIC) legislation has been finalized. A dedicated webpage has been created, and the model legislation is available to states for enactment. To access the RCIC model legislation, [click here](#). To access the leave-behind, [click here](#).

The RCIC will become active once enacted into law by seven states.

Note for Compact Legislative Introductions: No substantive changes should be made to the model language. Any substantive changes may jeopardize the enacting state's participation in the Compact. The Council of State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts reviews state compact legislation to ensure consistency with the model language.

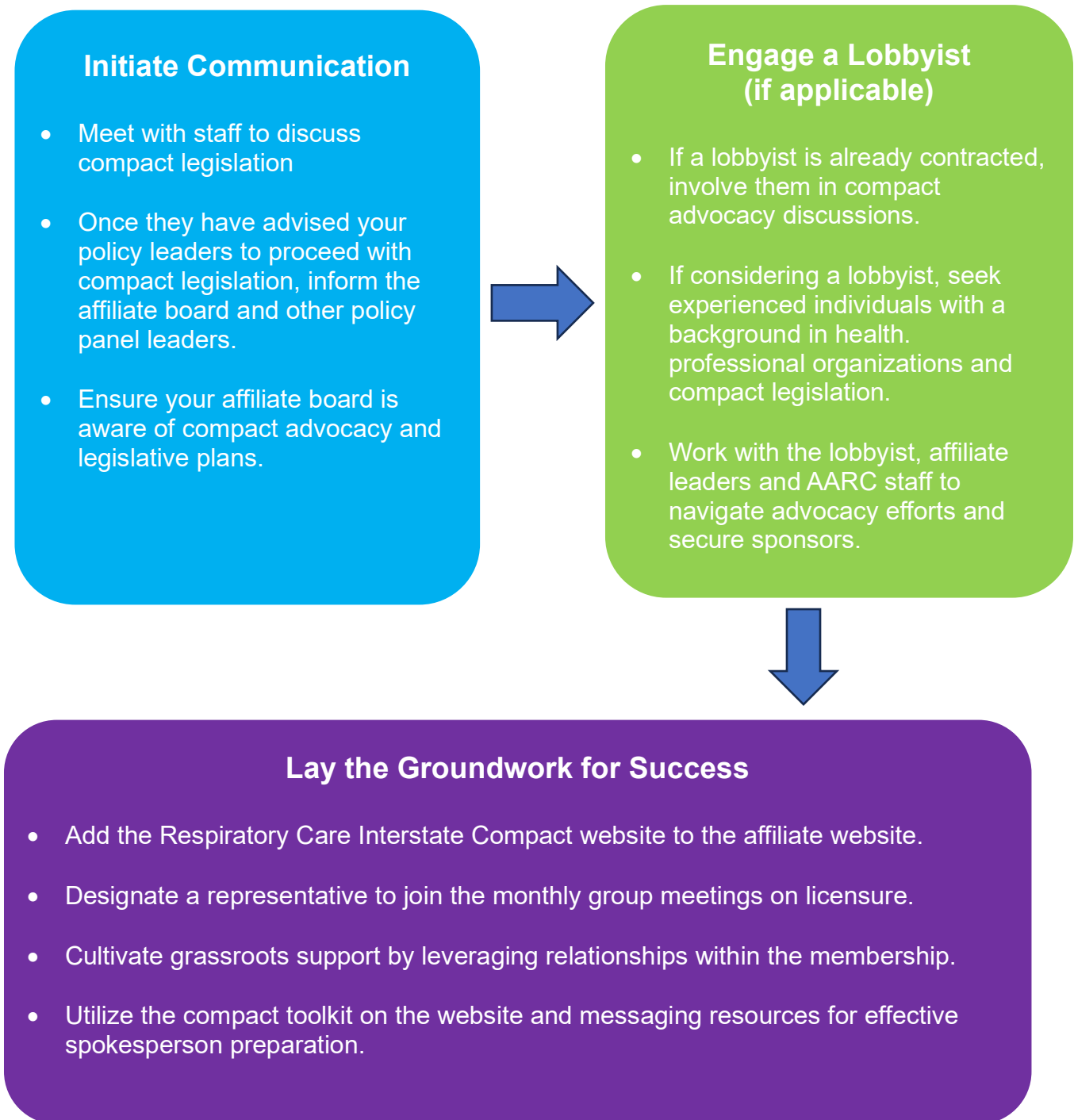
Participation in the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact

The Compact mandates respiratory therapists possess a state-issued license, defined as an authorization for title and practice. Regardless of how a state refers to a license by name, if a state authorizes title and practice, it qualifies for participation in the RCIC.

Other individual requirements exist in the compact for a respiratory therapist to use the compact, and therefore the legislation and educational materials should be referenced for further information.

Respiratory Care Interstate Compact Advocacy Action Steps

A step-by-step plan is essential to your affiliate's successful Respiratory Care Interstate Compact advocacy efforts. The AARC and CSG, National Center for Interstate Compacts is available to provide educational assistance and technical support.



Proactive Connections: Know your Legislators

- Visit legislators before you have a specific legislative request. Do your homework and learn more about your legislators, as well as the initiatives they are sponsoring and their policy priorities. One easy way to do this is to ask an AI platform for their profile.
- There may be ways that your affiliate or its members can assist legislators, including providing advice on relevant policy issues or volunteering for their re-election campaign.
- Find commonalities for conversation by researching your legislator's interests, stance on issues and following his or her social media accounts, newsletter and website. Begin small by building a personal relationship with them and making them aware of the profession and its role in professional licensure mobility, healthcare and public protection improvement, and assisting military families.

Use your Contacts and Resources

Look for opportunities to connect with your legislators and their support staff. Survey your membership for natural connections or affiliations with legislators. Is your legislator your next-door neighbor, your uncle, or your sister's co-worker? Do you live in a small town where your legislators often gather at the local diner? Do you see legislators on a social basis? These situations have something in common: an opportunity to make personal connections. Utilize the connections that you have, both directly and indirectly.

Meeting with your Legislator

Be prepared and rehearse beforehand, if necessary. Remember, legislators are people, too! You do not have to know an answer to every question—it is perfectly acceptable to say that you will follow up with them after the meeting with more information.

Factors to Consider During Your Meeting

1. Be passionate but not emotional.
2. Use science, experiences, and stories to make your case.
3. Respect the time assigned for the meeting.
4. Stay on message. Clearly ask for what you want.
5. Bring copies of a leave-behind document that summarizes your message and points for reference.
6. Be sure to thank the legislator and/or aide for their time. Offer to follow up and do so on any issues or questions that come up during the meeting.

Stay Connected

- After your meeting, send a thank you email with any supporting information or documents that were discussed or might be a helpful resource.
- To become an important source of education for your legislator, it is important to stay connected with your legislator on a regular basis. Schedule additional meetings to discuss licensure or related issues as necessary and keep your legislator and their staff updated on other priorities. A strong relationship with your legislator can help gain support from other legislators on your bill.

Committee Support

Legislators are important to your progress, but the committees of jurisdiction likely include some of the most important and relevant members of the state legislature. One or two committees of jurisdiction will be assigned to hear your bill in each legislative house. Activities to build relationships should originally be focused on these committees and then branch out to the other legislators as each bill moves through its respective chamber.

Each committee may hold a public hearing on your bill, and they may vote to pass it out of committee—or not. In some states, many bills never even get a committee vote, and the bill simply dies due to lack of time or legislative will to call a vote. If multiple committees are assigned in either house, passage by both committees is likely required

for your bill to proceed. There are some legislative mechanisms to bypass committees or expedite bill passage, but these are rarely used.

Points to remember: Meet with your legislators and health policy staff to introduce the affiliate and its members as resources; share stories and statistics as relevant.

Lay the Foundation: Prepare to Advocate

Step 1: Education

Begin to educate your members and advocates early in the process about how the RCIC benefits the profession. Share and review the RCIC [fact sheet](#).

Step 2: Mobilization

Help members and advocates understand how to contribute and support advocacy efforts, including guidance in contacting and communicating with legislators. The more prepared members and advocates are in advance, the easier it will be to mobilize them in a timely manner.

Asking your members to contact their state legislators is an essential component to your affiliate's overall grassroots strategy. Establish a relationship with your legislator before you ask for his or her support - no one likes to be asked a favor when you first meet them!

Research

- Understand your legislator's background, voting record, and key issues.
- Familiarize yourself with their priorities and interests.

Attend Events

- Attend town hall meetings, public forums, or legislative sessions.
- Introduce yourself and express your concerns during Q&A sessions.

Build a Network

- Connect with local political groups or advocacy organizations.
- Attend community events to meet other constituents and influencers.

Use Social Media

- Follow your legislators on social media platforms.
- Engage in discussions and share relevant information.

Schedule a Meeting

- Request a meeting to meet your legislator or their staff to discuss your initiatives
- Be concise, respectful, and well-prepared for the meeting.

Craft a Clear Message

- Clearly articulate your issue and its impact.
- Offer potential solutions and highlight bipartisan aspects.

Be a Resource

- Provide information, data, and real-life examples to support your position.
- Offer to be a resource on specific topics.

Stay Informed

- Keep track of legislative developments and bills.
- Respond promptly to legislative actions with relevant input.

Express Gratitude

- Thank your legislator(s) for their time and consideration.
- Follow up with updates on the progress of your discussed issues.

Build Long-Term Relationships

- Establish an ongoing dialogue.
- Keep the legislator informed about events and activities.

Step 3: Communicating with Members

The affiliate must have an effective and reliable method to reach all members in a timely manner and be confident that they will follow through promptly. Using your member email list to send an action alert is a great option, as are sharing action alerts on Facebook groups. You can also submit a request to the member communications team to email all credentialed practitioners in your state (must go through an email marketing platform to comply with privacy laws). For additional support, reach out to non-member respiratory therapists in your state.

Communication is key to success. Maintain continuous dialogue with your members throughout the process. It is particularly helpful to have your affiliate members organized or searchable by the state legislative district, so you can reach out to members living in targeted legislators' districts.

Using multiple channels of communication is the most reliable method to reach all members effectively. Newsletters, email, social media, and your website are all effective platforms, especially when messages are shared across all channels.

Keep your website up to date with the latest information on the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact.

Add the following text to your website with the accompanying links:

AARC: <https://www.aarc.org/respiratory-care-interstate-compact/>

Or CSG: [Learn more](#) about the Respiratory Care Interstate Compact, including what it means for the future of our profession.

Build Your Coalition

Communicating with other professional healthcare associations and stakeholders early in the process can help build support for compact legislation. Other allied health professionals can offer valuable perspectives on the opportunities and challenges that they encountered.

Hospital Systems

Reaching out to hospital systems that employ respiratory therapists to advocate for support of compact legislation in your state is crucial for several reasons.

- The compact allows for streamlined licensure processes across participating states, facilitating easier mobility for respiratory therapists, which can address workforce shortages and ensure patients have access to qualified professionals.
- By supporting the compact, hospital systems can demonstrate their commitment to upholding high standards of care and promoting the professional advancement and recognition of respiratory therapists.
- Participation in the compact can enhance collaboration and knowledge sharing among respiratory therapists, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes and overall healthcare quality within the hospital system.

Allied Health Profession Associations

- Collaboration among various healthcare disciplines is crucial in advocating for legislative changes that benefit the entire healthcare system. By aligning with other allied health professionals, respiratory therapists can amplify their advocacy efforts and present a united front to policymakers.
- Supporting the compact not only benefits respiratory therapists but also promotes interprofessional collaboration and seamless patient care, as it allows for easier mobility and reciprocity of licensure among states.
- Gaining support from other allied health professional associations underscores the importance of recognizing the unique expertise and contributions of

respiratory therapists in healthcare delivery, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes and a stronger, more integrated healthcare workforce.

- When your affiliate sponsors a legislative day, consider inviting a representative of an aligned healthcare group as a speaker. As a part of your legislative day, your affiliate could honor a legislator or two with a reception and invite key contacts from other healthcare groups. Consider inviting members of other healthcare groups to your annual meeting as speakers or honorees.

Legislative Process, Calendar and Timeline

Success depends on setting and adhering to a timeline. The Compact Work Group should develop the timeline, and consider the following:

- The legislative calendar (the months when the legislature is in session).
- Any/all deadlines for submission of proposed legislation (e.g., for committee of jurisdiction, consideration by majority leader, committee of the whole) that can be ascertained from trusted legislative aides or your lobbyist (if you have one).
- The committee of jurisdiction and their schedule.
- Other political factors (ex: budget bills holding up your bill); and
- Your bill sponsor and their scheduling needs.

Considerations for selecting a bill sponsor(s)

- Choose a legislator who will champion your bill and truly stand behind it.
- Choose a legislator who chairs or serves on committees of jurisdiction (e.g., Health Committee, Committee on Professional Regulation).
- Consider which legislators have supported and sponsored other compact legislation; research compact legislation in your state and identify the bill sponsors
- Consider if any of your legislators are respiratory therapists or other medical professionals as they might be more likely to support your efforts.

Once you have identified a suitable sponsor

- Meet with them to discuss your expectations.
- Share a copy of the compact language and a link to the website; include the staff member(s) who will be working on the bill - they are your key contacts, and they need to understand your bill and your affiliate's goals.

Your time, efforts and dedication to policy and advocacy are integral to the success of our organization and profession.

Thank you once again for your commitment to policy and advocacy! Together, we can make a positive impact on the legislative landscape and advance the interests of our profession.