

Maine LD 2137

Establishes the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

CSG Testimony – Jessica Thomas

My name is Jessica Thomas, I'm a Policy Analyst at The Council of State Governments. My testimony is meant to provide educational information on the compact, LD2137.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Defense, CSG has developed the compact language with stakeholders within these professions. The Compact will enable dentists and dental hygienists to get a compact privilege to practice in states that join the compact, rather than get an individual license in every state in which they want to practice.

The Compact benefits military families. If a military family gets assigned to a new duty station in a compact member state, the service member or their spouse can continue to work via the compact with a compact privilege.

The Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact is similar in form and function to the seven occupational licensing compacts that Maine is already a member of. It is most like Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy compacts, both of which Maine has joined.

A dentist or dental hygienist must first hold an active, unencumbered license in a compact member state to be eligible to apply for a compact privilege. Practitioners must also pass a background check and meet other eligibility requirements related to education and examinations. The dentist or dental hygienist must pass the national boards examinations as well as a clinical assessment.

From a regulatory perspective, the Compact preserves the authority of each compact member state to protect public health and safety through the existing state regulatory structure. A licensee practicing under a compact privilege must abide by the laws, regulations and rules that govern the practice of dentistry or dental hygiene in the state in which they are located. The scope of practice does not change. Maine has jurisdiction over anyone practicing in Maine under a compact privilege.

Once in effect, an interstate licensure data system will be established that will contain licensure information and investigative and disciplinary information. This allows participating states to see information on those practicing within their state.

In our experience with other compacts, the fiscal impact on the state is very minimal or non-existent. Maine will be able to charge a fee for the compact privilege. This can be used to offset any potential fees.

Like all of the other occupational licensing compacts, the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact will be governed by a commission made up of the member states. The delegate will be a representative from Maine's state licensing authority.

The compact will come into effect once it's enacted by seven states. The compact has been enacted in three states, Washington, Iowa, Wisconsin and Tennessee. It has pending legislation in 12 states.