

NM Senate passes interstate medical compact bill

In a 40-0 vote, lawmakers see a 'first step' to address New Mexico's health care worker shortage

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New Mexico came one step closer Friday to entering an interstate medical compact that would make it easier for doctors licensed in other states to practice in New Mexico.

The state Senate voted 40-0 to approve [Senate Bill 1](#), the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Act. Supporters of the bill hail it as a critical step in addressing the state's shortage of health care workers and expanding telehealth services in rural areas.

Advocates for entering the compact have in recent years faced [pushback](#) from some lawmakers. Some Democrats have also been reluctant to focus on more than two compacts at a time, contending that entering several could [overburden](#) the state Regulation and Licensing Division.



Lawmakers who spoke from the Senate floor on Friday praised the bill, but were quick to add that they don't see it as a silver bullet for the many problems facing New Mexico's health care system. They said the health care worker shortage will persist until the state reforms its medical malpractice laws, which currently have no cap on damages payments. Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has made such reform a [priority](#) for her final year in office.

"Some have said it's not a silver bullet. I prefer to say it's not the only solution," Sen. Linda Trujillo (D-Santa Fe), one of the bill's sponsors, said from the Senate floor Friday.

In a subsequent interview with Source NM, she said she

thinks that loan forgiveness for health care professionals and affordable housing are also key steps toward solving the worker shortage.

“There’s a lot of work to do and it isn’t just found in one particular piece of legislation,” she said.

While similar legislation [failed](#) in the 2025 session, lawmakers this week praised SB1’s passage and several stressed the importance of entering similar compacts for other licensed professionals. Representatives in the state House on Wednesday [advanced](#) nine bills focused on interstate compacts for several licensed occupations, including physician’s assistants, physical therapists and social workers.

Trujillo told Source that several of those multi-state compacts do not yet have enough participating states to be considered “active.” Others have not yet done the proper rulemaking needed to become active compacts, leading her to question whether signing onto them in this 30-day legislative session is the best use of the Legislature’s time.

Republicans in the Senate on Friday showed nothing but enthusiasm for those other compacts, though.

“I would just like to remind this chamber that this is just one little piece of the pie and that we have a lot more compacts

lined up, too," Sen. Steve Lanier (R-Aztec), who's seeking the Republican nomination for governor, said during the Senate's discussion of the bill.

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