



Written Testimony Prepared for the Joint Legislative
Public Hearing on the 2024 Executive Budget
Proposal Health/Medicaid

Legislative Office Building

Hearing Room B

Albany, NY

January 23, 2024

As members of the New York State Camp Directors Association, we appreciate the opportunity to provide this written testimony on the SFY 2024-25 Executive Budget Proposal,

The New York State Camp Directors Association (NYSCDA) represents the children's camp industry in New York State. NYSCDA currently consists of approximately 125 member camps throughout New York, representing private, not-for-profit, day, and overnight camps and camps that serve special needs populations.

NYSCDA supports the Governor's proposal to have New York State join the Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact that would allow registered nurses and licensed practical nurses that are licensed and in good standing in another state that has signed onto the compact to practice in New York (HMH Part R).

Many camp programs around New York State are still working to recover from the challenges of the pandemic and continue to face a critical shortage of nurses to provide care at camps. Camps are currently required to have at least one medical professional (physician, nurse practitioner, nurse, physician assistant, etc.) to serve as health director of the camp, and some larger camps are required to have additional health staff depending on the number of enrolled campers.

Camps have struggled to hire and retain qualified nurses for years. The shortage in the industry has only worsened since the pandemic began and many programs cannot find nurses in New York to work at their camps. Most nurses are looking for full time employment and it is challenging to find qualified nurses to work an eight-week program. Often, camps work to hire staff many months in advance of the camp opening and by the time the camp season is set to begin, the qualified candidate has been able to find full-time employment elsewhere. In addition, many nurses change plans and retract their employment at camps right before the camp season begins or even during the season, leaving camps struggling to find another qualified candidate to operate a safe camp environment. Camps have worked to minimize this challenge by hiring school nurses, but that also has its limitations.

NYSCDA Camps have had success in hiring nurses from other states to fill the void of professionals in New York. Many camps are geographically close to Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Pennsylvania and can attract qualified nurses to work in their summer programs. Currently, the New York State Education Department requires that an out-of-state licensed nurse obtain full New York State licensure to practice in New York. That requirement exists regardless of the duration of employment in New York. This burdensome requirement often serves as a deterrent to a nurse who

practices in another state and is interested in working for an 8-week session at a summer camp in New York.

In addition to the burden on the individual professional to file this paperwork and fee, the delay in processing the application creates challenges as well. On average, the New York State Education Department takes over two months to review an out of state application to practice in New York, and that is only once all the necessary paperwork, including educational and licensing information from the applicant's home state is fully submitted.

Joining the interstate nurse licensure compact would help alleviate this workforce shortage allows nurses that are licensed to practice in states that are members of the compact. Currently 41 states have joined the Interstate Nurse Licensure Compact. New York's rigid licensing regime makes it an unattractive destination for many nurses who are looking for employment in New York, especially "travelling nurses" who are seeking short-term nursing jobs. Easing bureaucratic hurdles and time-consuming paperwork and allowing flexibility in nurse licensure for out-of-state nurses will go a long way to alleviating the current nurse shortage in New York State. These nurses are licensed in their own state and requiring the same professional to obtain a duplicative New York state licensure is an overburdensome measure that only serves to limit the ability of camps to hire qualified nurses.

Camps need to have nurses to run a safe camp program which ensures that families have accessible and safe childcare when school is out of session. We thank the Governor for addressing this critical workforce issue and urge the legislature to adopt this proposal in the final enacted budget.

Matt Krouner
Camp Schodack
President
New York State Camp Directors Association