Exploration of Advancing a National Standard of Practice for Long-Term Care Administrators

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Introduction and Background

- A common standard for licensure and ability to become licensed allows for effective leaders to be successful across state boundaries, and research has indicated this has the potential to improve the quality of care for residents when adopting a rigorous, common standard.
- Standardization of licensure and professional requirements achieves portability of licensure, thus allowing individuals and companies to meet needs in diverse geographical areas and across multiple care settings.
- Advancing consistent licensure requirements enhances the abilities of researchers to analyze and measure the effectiveness of long-term care administrator (LTCa) practices and training programs.
- Other professions have addressed this challenge in various ways, with this study attempting to document and apply lessons learned from other professions.
- NAB has conducted a Professional Practice Analysis, which analyzes the knowledge, tasks, and skills a LTCA must possess to both enter the profession and to demonstrate competency to advance throughout multiple LTCa careers.
- NAB is currently seeking to develop a nationally recognized and voluntary Health Services Executive (HSE) license or certification to recognize administrators and provide the mobility for long-term care professionals to successfully and effortlessly work across state boundaries.
- The National Emerging Leadership Summit (NELS) participants support the HSE initiative currently being advanced by NAB.

Methods

- Best practices within multiple professional organizations were analyzed to determine how similar professions standardized their criteria for admittance to practice or admittance for licensure exams.
- The licensure, educational, and statutory requirements for physicians, registered nurses, attorneys, certified public accountants, physical therapists, and occupational therapists were compiled, noting areas where the included professions allowed for reciprocity or multistate licensure via state statutes.
- Information on compacts (i.e., voluntary agreements) and reciprocity agreements between states to promote reciprocity agreements and align licensure requirements for licensure or entry into practice were also analyzed in this study.
- Lastly, initiatives advanced by professional organizations were studied to determine if any of the above-referenced professions utilized a model that would be suitable for adaptation to the LTCa profession.

Table 1. Summarized Licensing Requirements and Strategies for Advancing a Common Standard of Practice Across Professions

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<th>Professional Designation</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Strategies to Advance a Common Standard</th>
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| Physician                | Must complete four-year bachelor’s degree in a medical school, which is four years. Medical schools must be accredited by the Liaison Committee of Medical Education. Medical school must complete a residency, which requires three to seven years of further education. | Licensing certification for physicians is governed on a state-by-state basis. To practice medicine in a state a physician has to pass a state-specific medical boards exam. 
- The universal application (UA) is used by 23 state medical boards. The UA standardizes the process of applying for a medical or residency license. The UA allows a medical or residency license. The UA allows in licensure portability across states. The Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC) is legislation that has been passed in South Dakota, Indiana, Oregon, Idaho, and West Virginia. The IMLC creates an expedited multi-state licensure pathway for qualified physicians. |
| Registered Nurse (RN)    | Completion of a four-year nursing degree from an accredited nursing program is most common. Many nurses with a bachelor’s degree of nursing return to school for a bachelor’s degree to be an RN. | Nurse licensure certification is governed on a state-by-state level. Usually, each state has its own individual criteria for licensure. The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) provides a means of getting licensure by endorsement or by exam. A multi-state license allows one to work across state lines in any state that has joined the NLC. Any person holding this multi-state license can work in 24 different states. |
| Attorney                 | Must complete a four-year bachelor’s degree in law. Law school, if enrolled full-time, takes approximately three years to earn a Juris Doctor degree. | Licensing certification for attorneys is governed on a state-by-state basis. To practice law in the majority of states, an individual has to pass that state’s bar exam. The state allows an attorney to practice law in any state if practicing from a law school in that state. Some states have reciprocity for licenses when one passes a state bar exam. For example, if passing the Illinois bar exam, that person could practice in 31 states; if passing the Alaska bar exam, reciprocity would exist with 21 other states. |
| Certified Public Accountant (CPA) | To sit for the four-part CPA exam, an individual must have either credits in education and a one-year minimum of work experience as an accountant or have a doctorate in accounting. | The majority of states require that an individual takes and passes a CPA exam for licensure. Six states still grant an individual an initial certificate, which doesn’t require the work experience, but still allow the person to sit for the CPA exam at a later date for licensure. As of June 2015, all states will follow the requirements for 150 hours of education and the one-year minimum of accounting experience to sit for the CPA exam. An individual must pass the uniform CPA exam, due to the Uniform CPA Act. |
| Physical Therapist (PT) | Must PT programs require a four- year bachelor’s degree. PT programs are usually three years and must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). | PT licensure certification is governed on a state-by-state basis. To practice as a PT, one must pass the state exam and renew the license on a regular basis. PTs must practice within the scope of the physiological therapy practice defined by the state licensure laws. As of June 2015, all states will follow the requirements for 150 hours of education and the one-year minimum of accounting experience to sit for the CPA exam. An individual must pass the uniform CPA exam, due to the Uniform CPA Act. |
| Long-Term Care Administrator (LTCA) | Requirements vary depending on the state in which one wishes to become licensed. The majority of states require a bachelor’s degree, and one state requires a master’s degree. | Licensing for LTCA is governed by state-by-state, with different requirements to take a state exam. The requirements that usually differ are education, field experience, and hours spent as an administrator in training. In most states, one cannot work as an LTCA without a license. NAB seeks to standardize the LTCa license, enabling administrators to work in any state with recognition and acceptance of a broad-based license, which also meets state licensure requirements. A National Certified Nursing Home Administrator (CNHA) designation from ACHCA is recognized by over 20 states and can ease the licensure process in those states for LTCa. |

Results

- Table 1 displays the summarized licensing requirements and strategies for advancing a common standard of practice across professions.

- The table includes the professional designation, educational requirements, state licensure requirements, and strategies to advance a common standard.

Figure 1. Portability of licensure across states, by profession.

Figure 2. The NAB-identified Health Services Executive core competencies.

Conclusions

- In the development of a common standard, the requirements of the applicants should be more rigorous to promote a field that is set except from other professions with easier minimum requirements.

- The information provided in this study supports the creation of a national standard of practice for LTCas, demonstrating multiple models that are feasible and that can aid in this effort.

- The professions evaluated should serve as a template when advancing strategies related to a common standard for licensure through legislative efforts or reciprocity agreements.

- Future research on this topic should continue to address how compact such as the NLC and IMLC are created and introduced to legislative committees for ratification.

References


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