

Gaps in Nursing Databases May Result in Unsafe Nurses Being Hired in Other States

By Catherine Bertram - 7/18/2010



24 states have joined the "[Nurse Licensure Compact](#)", an umbrella entity designed to unify states' nursing discipline records. But [some states' lax enforcement and reporting have allowed dangerous nurses to go to other states, even within the compact, with seemingly clean records.](#)

For example, there are reports that registered nurse, Craig Peske, is accused of taking Dilaudid, an opiate and morphine derivative, from the Wisconsin hospital where he worked. The hospital reported him to the state disciplinary authority and the police. But by the time he was charged with narcotics offenses, he had already moved to North Carolina and resumed his nursing practice based on an "interstate" license.

In this example, if one state delays reporting, or fails to report, a dangerous nurse, the nurse may be able to move to another state and continue practicing undetected.

Hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care providers must run criminal and background checks on nurses--whether practical nurses or registered nurses--before they hire them.

Every state should post its disciplinary information on a publicly accessible, easily searchable website. However, sadly, due to budget cuts and other reasons some states do not have up to date lists of nursing or nursing aides who have been convicted of abuse, neglect or drug related offenses.

You can also search for state records of any home health nurses or aides you are considering hiring to take care of a family member but it is critical that these resources are accurate and up to date or they fail to meet their very mission which is to protect the public from unsafe individuals.

Here are the links to the licensing websites for DC, Maryland and Virginia:

[Virginia's Department of Health Professions Public Information System](#)

[Maryland's Board of Nursing Licensee Lookup](#)

[D.C.'s Health Professional Licensing Administration Licensee Search](#)