

Senate Executive Departments and Administration Committee

Ben Mickens 271-1403

AMENDMENT # 2026-0579s, adopting the physician associate licensure compact to SB 425, relative to the terms and qualifications for the adjutant general and deputy adjutant general, and commandant of the New Hampshire veterans' home.

Hearing Date: February 18, 2026

Time Opened: 9:01 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:21 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Pearl, McGough, Gannon and Reardon

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill:

I. Changes the retirement age for both the adjutant general and deputy adjutant general from 65 to 64.

II. Changes the adjutant general's tenure from the age cap alone to 5 years or upon reaching the new age cap of 64.

III. Creates a new appointment process for the commandant of the New Hampshire veterans' home.

Sponsors:

Sen. Lang
Sen. Watters

Sen. Gannon
Sen. Innis

Sen. Pearl
Rep. Edwards

Who supports the amendment: Senator David Rochefort, Senator Daniel Innis, Associate Commissioner Tricia Tilly (DHHS), Director David Chorney (GONORTH) and seventy-nine others.

Who opposes the amendment: Lisa Marie Mulkern.

Who is neutral on the amendment: No one.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator David Rochefort

- Senator Rochefort introduced amendment # 2026-0579s.
- Senator Rochefort explained that this amendment would have New Hampshire joining the multi-state Physician Associate Licensure Compact
- He stated that other health care providers enjoy the benefit of similar compacts and physician associates should be included as well. He added that the legislature has worked over the past few years to streamline the licensure process in New Hampshire
- Senator Rochefort explained that the amendment would allow physician associates to hold licensure in multiple states with ease.
- Senator Rochefort explained that 21 states have joined this compact and more are considering joining.
- He stated that this bill will not change the scope of practice for physician associates and will maintain that all physician associates will still be required to abide by state law in the state they are practicing.
- Senator Rochefort explained that this has been brought forward as a non-Germane amendment because of a change in federal scoring on rural health initiatives. The rural health transformation grant is out of sync with our filing timeline, which left us with limited options to get the legislation through.

Michael Bartlett (American Academy of Physician Associates)

- Mr. Bartlett explained that this is an interstate compact to allow for interstate practice that is similar to other compacts New Hampshire has adopted.
- Mr. Bartlett stated that this compact has been adopted in 21 states, including Massachusetts and Rhode Island and is being looked at by another 15 states this legislative session.
- He explained that states that opt in to the compact recognize other participating states' licensure so long as they are in good standing.
- He stated that the compact expands employment opportunities in the participating states and incentivizes multi-state practice.
- Mr. Bartlett stated that the compact has many benefits for state regulators such as reducing application times and enhancing public safety.
- He added that becoming a part of the compact will improve the accessibility of care in rural areas of the state.
- Mr. Bartlett reiterated that any physical associates practicing in the state are still required to follow rules and regulations of the state.

- Mr. Bartlett explained that, through the compact, states can share disciplinary actions and practitioner status through an online database.

David Cuzzi (Prospect Hill Strategies, AAPA/NHSPA)

- Mr. Cuzzi voiced the New Hampshire Society of Physician Associates support and appreciation for the amendment.

Tricia Tilley (Associate Commissioner, DHHS)

- Ms. Tilley stated the department's support for amendment # 2026-0579s.
- The department has five reasons for supporting this change:
 1. Expands access to care, especially in rural care.
 2. This aligns with New Hampshire workforce trends and pipeline movement.
 3. It will speed up recruitment and retention.
 4. The amendment preserves state authority and patient protection.
 5. This is strategically aligned with the rural health transformation grant.

Senator Gannon asked if we are as likely to lose people as to gain them, for example, young people seeking warmer climates who can now move south more easily.

Ms. Tilley responded that the department doesn't have a clear answer to this but sees that the compact will help support the telehealth industry which would still be a big support to rural health in New Hampshire.

David Chorney (Director of Financial Sustainability and Policy, GO-NORTH)

- Mr. Chorney stated that the Rural Health Transformation grant is a 5-year cycle in which states are evaluated for existing and pending laws and regulations. He added that New Hampshire can earn more funding by aligning their procedures with the recommendations of the federal government.
- Mr. Chorney explained that the deadline for policy implementation is December 31st, 2027.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.