

TITLE 3: HUMAN RESOURCES
DIVISION 1: EDUCATION

§ 11101. Professional Student Exchange Program.

The CNMI shall participate in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education's Professional Student Exchange Program.

Source: [PL 20-08](#) § 3 (Aug. 21, 2017), modified.

Commission Comment: [PL 20-08](#) included the following "Short Title" and "Findings and Purpose" sections:

Short Title. This Act may be cited as the "CNMI Professional Student Exchange Program Act of 2017."

Findings and Purpose. The Commonwealth Legislature finds that the

CNMI is currently a member of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Membership in WICHE allows students from the CNMI to be eligible for reduced tuition at more than 200 participating WICHE institutions. Moreover, CNMI students under WICHE's Western Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE) are eligible to request for a reduced tuition rate of 150% of the resident tuition rate when they attend one of the 159 WUE institutions instead of paying out-of-state tuition which is sometimes double or more than double the resident tuition for many states. In addition, WICHE's Western Regional Graduate Program enables CNMI students to select any of the 400 participating graduate programs and pay the enrolling institution's resident tuition rate, instead of the nonresident rate that an out-of-state student would normally pay.

The Commonwealth Legislature does recognize that although being a member of WICHE greatly benefits graduate and undergraduate students in the CNMI, students who aspire to pursue post-graduate professional fields of study in the healthcare professions currently do not have the necessary scholarships available in the CNMI to assist them. However, the Commonwealth Legislature finds that WICHE will serve those students who want to pursue a professional degree in healthcare fields such as Dentistry, Allopathic Medicine, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Osteopathic Medicine, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant, Podiatry and Veterinary Medicine through WICHE's Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP). WICHE's PSEP enables students to enroll in some 130 selected out-of-state professional healthcare programs and pay reduced tuition. States typically fund students to enroll through PSEP if a professional healthcare program is not available at one of their in-state public institutions. Through PSEP, a student's home state pays a "support fee" to the receiving school to reduce the cost of the student's education. Most students enrolled in public programs pay resident tuition; if the support fee does not cover the difference between resident and nonresident tuition, they may pay slightly more.

The Commonwealth Legislature further finds that in order for the CNMI to fully invest in our students' education and help to bring in qualified local healthcare professionals, it is essential to participate in

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programs such as WICHE 's PSEP. Therefore, the purpose of this legislation is to promote a higher level of education for our students by enabling the CNMI to participate in WICHE's PSEP.

The Commission numbered this chapter and its sections pursuant to [1 CMC § 3806\(a\)](#).