

WHA Council on Workforce Development Urges Licensure Reform

DSPS Secretary Designee Hereth appreciates open dialogue with health care leaders

Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary Designee Dan Hereth joined the Sept. 22, 2023 meeting of the WHA Council on Workforce Development to provide an update on DSPS's work to reduce licensure delays and to hear from council members about how licensure processes impact their workforce and health care access.

Hereth noted, "Early in my tenure, when I was discussing with staff what they find most fulfilling, they said, 'hitting approve on licenses and talking to and helping applicants.'" Hereth shared how increased staffing resources from ARPA funding, along with some recently approved in the biennial budget, have resulted in turnaround time decreases and communication enhancements. Hereth also described the new DSPS dashboard that provides applicants with the number of days it will take for DSPS staff to review their application submissions, noting this is "darn near real-time."

Council members took the opportunity to share the experience of their new hires with Wisconsin licensing and the impact of delays on their workforce. They also described how each physician renewal timeframe creates a spike in work and in physician frustration at their organization, all unnecessary considering that hospitals and health systems undertake a required rigorous ongoing professional practice evaluation on every member of their medical staff annually. The group asked Hereth to support [legislation doubling renewal timeframes](#), from two to four years, that could help physicians, medical staff services and DSPS, especially if DSPS had the flexibility to set the schedule for renewals and break up current bottlenecks.

Council members also asked Hereth for relief from the delays caused by legal reviews for remote and isolated occurrences, noting that the current legislation aimed to reduce legal review burden recommended by the licensure study committee was originally proposed by DSPS.

Hereth said he was open to further dialogue about the proposed changes and thanked the committee for their frank and helpful feedback, along with the ongoing interactions with the WHA team and WHA Senior Vice President Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk. Hereth provided an example of the results of this interaction: "Ann and I have been talking for a long time about the need to start legal reviews at the front-end of the process since they take the longest, and I'm pleased to say we have now implemented that process."



WHA's Ann Zenk advocates for the study committee to explore expanding opportunities for expedited licensure pathways for qualified health care providers on Sept. 27, 2022.

Council members also heard from WHA staff on key advocacy underway. WHA Vice President Federal and State Relations Jon Hoelter provided an update on state and federal issues impacting health care leaders and the health care workforce, including:

- workforce-related dollars successfully increased in the state's enacted 2023-2025 biennial budget,
- WHA's work to ensure that Wisconsin legislators and stakeholders are aware of the leading place Wisconsin hospitals and health systems hold in the area of price transparency, and
- WHA efforts to catch Wisconsin up to the rest of the U.S. in next-of-kin policy to help break up post-acute care bottlenecks.

At a federal level, Hoelter discussed the status of two topics with federal proposals underway that WHA is defending against, and the work WHA and its members are doing with their partners at the Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative and the Wisconsin Office of Rural Health to sustain Wisconsin's HPSA designations.

To round out the WHA Council of Workforce Development's September meeting, WHA Health Care Analyst Emily Holden and Zenk provided an update on the work underway to prepare for the 2024 launch of the co-branded WHA-WisHHRA Wisconsin Health Care Workforce Salary Survey. Holden described a new registration process that will enhance data entry and report access for hospitals

and health systems. Zenk noted that WHA and WisHHRA are working together to make an even better survey available exclusively to WHA members at no cost. The survey will launch in the first week of January 2024.

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