

Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses Holds Third Hearing

[The Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses](#) held its third hearing on Oct. 12. The committee, which is comprised of four legislators and five members of the public, including WHA Senior Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk, is tasked with reviewing and improving the licensure process in Wisconsin.

The two previous hearings of the committee in [August](#) and [September](#) focused on how the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) processes licenses and potential reforms the committee could pursue, such as sunrise and sunset review laws that aim to scrutinize the reason for beginning new or maintaining existing state licensure of certain professions.

The Oct. 12 hearing included presentations by the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs, the Council of State Governments Center for Innovation, and the Arkansas House of Representatives Occupational Licensing Initiative Core Team, all discussing various reforms the committee could pursue. The presentations discussed the history of licensure, the benefits and limits of state policies that recognize universal licensure laws, and the utility of creating a standard process to regularly review state licensure laws.

At the conclusion of the presentations, committee members were asked for input on what type of legislation could be pursued to improve Wisconsin occupational licensure processes. Some members mentioned the importance of adequate data from the DSPS to assist the committee with how it can help improve the licensure process. Committee Chair Sen. Rob Stafsholt noted the committee had not heard back from DSPS with specific answers to the data request sent to the department in its first hearing, and suggested the council invite DSPS back to attend the next meeting in November. Committee members agreed, and the request for information and the invitation will be extended to DSPS.

The committee also discussed memos prepared by Legislative Council staff discussing different options the committee could pursue for having bill drafts introduced. Zenk advocated again for the committee to take up WHA's recommendations to expand Wisconsin 2021 Act 10 to allow new graduates of health care professions to begin practicing once they pass their national examinations and while they wait for DSPS to process their licensure. This would lengthen licensing renewal periods to reduce burden on professionals and DSPS and reduce unnecessary legal reviews that greatly extend the length of time it takes for certain professionals to become licensed. Zenk noted she was glad to see the memo include this as a potential option for the committee to explore.



WHA's Ann Zenk provides feedback as a member of the study committee.

The next committee hearing will be held Nov. 15.

Other Articles in this Issue

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