

Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses Holds Fourth Hearing

[The Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses](#) held its fourth hearing on Nov. 15. The committee, which is comprised of four legislators and five members of the public, including WHA Vice President of Workforce and Clinical Practice Ann Zenk, is tasked with reviewing and improving the licensure process in Wisconsin.

The three previous hearings of the committee in August, September, and October focused on how the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) 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 Nov. 15 hearing included presentations by a number of groups concerned about delays in licensure processing in Wisconsin, including the WI County Human Services Association, the WI Occupational Therapy Association, the WI Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, the WI Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the WI Society of Respiratory Care, and a substance abuse counselor who has had challenges becoming licensed in Wisconsin after already having been licensed in Minnesota. The different groups expressed their frustration with the licensure process that has led to delays in getting professionals licensed to practice in Wisconsin in a timely manner, while a number of them were empathetic to DPS's stated need for more staff to keep up with the growth in licensure requests.

DPS Assistant Deputy Secretary Jen Garret was joined by DPS Legislative Director Mike Tierney to provide the agency's comments on the group of preliminary bill drafts under consideration by the board, including those advocated for by WHA on first-time licensure, legal review reform and extended renewals.

Garrett's and Tierney's remarks, and the previous information provided DPS by Secretary-designee Dan Hereth prompted a lengthy question and answer session with study committee members asking for more in-depth, professions-specific data from the department, and for the department's assessment of how their new online application process, LicenseE, is improving licensure delays. The study committee tabled scheduled discussion of the draft bills until the next meeting of the [Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licenses](#), scheduled for Dec. 13, 2022.

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