

Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board

Department of Safety and Professional Services

4822 Madison Yards Way

PO Box 8366

Madison WI 53708-8366



November 30, 2022

Members, Wisconsin Legislature Joint Committee on Finance

c/o Committee Clerk Joe Malkasian

Submitted via email: joe.malkasian@legis.wisconsin.gov

RE: Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Staffing Challenges and Request for Action

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board. We are a newly formed board which plays an integral role in the regulation and licensing of our profession. We have received an increasing number of complaints from licensees and employers regarding delays in the processing of Wisconsin licenses. Physician Assistants have had their employment start dates delayed, which has had a direct financial impact. Employers have been frustrated in the delays while trying to replace or expand staffing during a time of increasing demand for medical services. Patient care has been directly impacted by these delays.

Our board members have heard the repeated complaints of phone calls to the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) being unanswered, messages left at DSPS not being returned, and applicants not being able to get questions answered about their applications. We have also heard of delays in applications taking over four months in some cases. We know DSPS has made efforts to improve the application process with the integration of LicenseE, the new, online, self-guided occupational license application platform, but there are still staffing challenges that create continued delays.

The increasing demand for services from DSPS exceeds the staff and resources available. It is our understanding that the fee revenue collected from professionals applying for and renewing their licenses is sufficient to cover the existing staffing needs, but the spending authority set by the Legislature has been restricted to an amount below the fee revenue available. It is also our understanding that any amount above the spending authority ceiling is diverted by the Legislature for other state budget purposes completely unrelated to the Board's charge of physician assistant licensing and regulation. This limited spending authority has imposed barriers to hiring sufficient staff at DSPS to do the day-to-day work of processing applications. The significant increase in the volume of work, combined with too few employees, has resulted in staff shortages, employee burnout and a work environment that inhibits retention.

On March 24, 2022, the Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board made a motion to express our concern about these ongoing restrictions that have created backlogs in licensing physician assistants and to urge the Legislature to take immediate action to increase the staffing and spending authority of DSPS.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Jarrett", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jennifer Jarrett (On behalf of the Board)

Chairperson, Wisconsin Physician Assistant Affiliated Credentialing Board

c: Legislative Council Study Committee on Occupational Licensing