

Rep. Krug: Legislature addresses state agency role in professional licensure delays

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Maybe you've seen coverage recently of the fact that professional licenses in Wisconsin have recently been delayed by the departments that are supposed to provide them. I hope you haven't been caught waiting for a license yourself; too many people have been.

A recent wave of news articles across the state is shedding light on these professional licensure delays. The delays have spanned a range of employment sectors but the biggest problem seems to be providing medical licenses. Nurses, technicians, assistants; all these professionals need licenses in to enter or advance in the medical field. We already have a healthcare worker shortage, of course, so unnecessary delays in licensure mean that even the medical professionals themselves aren't the only people feeling this problem. We all see secondary effects such as longer waits for healthcare appointments and lower access to services.

Throughout the state, legislators are hearing about the impact this is having on our students and how this delay hurts employers and patients in our community. My office has heard from several new and renewing pharmacists especially who cannot obtain the licenses they've trained and studied to obtain.

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2022/08/22/wisconsin-nurses-lose-jobs-delay-careers-they-wait-licenses/7833691001/?gnt-cfr=1>

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/2022/08/18/wisconsin-licensing-agency-problems-leaves-nurses-therapists-waiting/10267030002/?gnt-cfr=1>

When students and professionals are being held up at every step of the process, the delays prevent healthcare agencies from staffing appropriately. Longer waits in patient care become the norm. And as hard as it can be to find health care workers, the impact of these delays on the workers themselves is devastating. “Jobs, jobs everywhere, but no paycheck anywhere for me.” Not until the agencies in charge of licensure get their acts together, no.

These professional licensure delays are another example of Governor Evers’ failed leadership. Agency after agency has incompetently served Wisconsinites – including the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) unemployment insurance debacle; the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)’ negligent care for those who have served our country; and the Department of Health Services (DHS) failure to protect elderly residents, to name a few.

While Governor Evers’ Administration has tried to blame the problem on a lack of money and resources, their narrative just doesn’t add up. Millions of dollars have been doled out to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) and other agencies to improve staffing and technology.

In the past two budgets, over 10 new positions have been added for Professional Trade and Regulation and over \$10 million was allocated for IT upgrades and online licensing. But even with this new funding, our prospective healthcare workers, who are eager to put their new skills and knowledge to use serving their fellow Wisconsinites, continue to experience delays.

Are our licensure gatekeepers “quietly quitting?” Are their managers not managing? It’s not as if demand for professional services is going away, so why is the supply of licenses lagging so far behind?

I’m pleased to share that [a special legislative committee has been formed and is meeting](#) to get to the bottom of the problem. They will be working on legislation to address the issues. The bills should be ready by December for action in the new legislative session in January, which is our next chance to act. I look forward to supporting the work of the committee.

As Governor Evers and DSPS continue to bury their heads in the sand, Wisconsinites are suffering from their failures. It’s time for this mismanagement to end, so our residents can work up to their education and training level and Wisconsinites can receive the services they need.