

Dept. of Safety and Professional Services: Secretary earns national recognition

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Raleigh NC - The Council of State Governments (CSG) recently recognized 20 up-and-coming appointed and elected officials from across the country at its National Conference, and Dan Hereth was among the group honored.

Hereth, the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary-designee, became the first official from Wisconsin to earn a *CSG 20 Under 40 Leadership Award*, given to those who exemplify strong leadership and a passion for public service.

“It’s my name in the program but make no mistake: this award is largely based on the work done over the past year-and-a-half at Wisconsin DSPS,” Hereth said. “Credit for that goes to a broad range of public servants, from (Wisconsin) Governor Tony Evers. to department leadership and frontline staff.”

In August 2022, Gov. Evers appointed Hereth to lead the department. His tenure at DSPS has been defined by strategic investments in the people, processes, and technology necessary to improve the department’s work while maintaining its commitment to public safety.

He led the effort to modernize professional licensing in Wisconsin, moving the state from paper license applications to online credentialing and renewals. This technology upgrade, combined with federal funding to add more staff and a steady focus on process improvements, has increased productivity at DSPS and drastically reduced licensing times in Wisconsin.

- DSPS is currently reviewing application materials in [2-3 calendar days](#), meaning more workers licensed and ready to join the workforce more quickly
- The department issued a record number of licenses in 2023, already more than 40% over 2022's total.

Elsewhere in DSPS, Plan Review times are currently [averaging 14-23 days](#) depending on project type. As recently as 2017-18, plan review times consistently took 60-80 days.

"I'm proud of the way our department and staff have remained focused on innovative and results-driven improvements. By keeping plan review times low and helping qualified applicants get licensed and into the workforce more quickly, our work is benefitting the entire state," Hereth explained.

"While the outstanding state officials recognized by CSG this year come from diverse backgrounds, different political parties, every branch of state government and every region of our country, they share the same commitment to serve others," said David Adkins, CSG Executive Director/CEO. "They are hard-working, visionary leaders whose passion for public service is producing results for their states."

Beyond faster plan review and licensing times, Hereth has increased outreach to Wisconsin employers, professional associations, and institutions of higher education to identify common ground and collaborate on projects that improve licensing for the more than 240 professions DSPS regulates in Wisconsin. He has personally spearheaded collaborations with the Wisconsin Dental Association, the Wisconsin Pharmacy Society, and the Universities of Wisconsin to find efficiencies in the licensing process. Under his leadership, DSPS has also overseen upgrades to the state's [Prescription Drug Monitoring Program](#), launched a [new fire risk tool](#) to better protect Wisconsin communities, and led the [first update](#) to state plumbing code in well over a decade.

20 Under 40 Leadership Award recipients are selected from a competitive pool of applicants. Those nominated should have demonstrated excellence in one or more of the following areas:

- Ability to engage officials across party, departments, branch and/or state lines in meaningful ways to advance the common good for their state/territory;
- Provide exceptional leadership to a state project, committee, chamber, commission or special group;
- Serve as a champion of change and seek to enhance the lives of all constituents within a specific policy area.

The *20 Under 40 Leadership Award* winners were formally honored in a ceremony at the 2023 CSG National Conference on Friday in Raleigh, North Carolina. Learn more about the CSG 20 Under 40 Leadership Award, and this year's other recipients at web.csg.org/20-40.

About DSPS: DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, and maintains the Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, DSPS is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With four offices and 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote safety and advance the economy.