

Dept. of Safety and Professional Services: Wisconsin working to connect pharmacists with potential employees

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Madison, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS) and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) partnered with the Pharmacy Examining Board for an educational webinar Thursday. The topic was youth apprenticeships, and the audience was Wisconsin pharmacies and pharmacists.

“We can’t expect businesses to be intuitively aware of every opportunity available to them,” said DPS Secretary-designee Dan Hereth. “That’s why we welcome opportunities to work with our regulatory boards, like the Pharmacy Examining Board, to find ways to support credential holders in practice and encourage compliance with regulatory requirements.”

Wisconsin began registering pharmacy technicians earlier this year. To register, individuals must be high school graduates or enrolled in a Youth Apprenticeship program approved by DWD.

“At the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, we’ve worked hard to grow Youth Apprenticeship to a record 8,356 students with 5,742 employers, and that work includes outreach to showcase the value that this program offers employers in a variety of industries,” DWD Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek said. “This webinar is one more opportunity for DWD to expand awareness of Youth Apprenticeship as a proven talent development strategy in health sciences, including pharmacies.”

DWD offers a variety of [Youth Apprenticeship programs](#), including a Pharmacy Technician Apprenticeship program that lets high school students learn on the job while working in a local pharmacy through a mix of mentorship, evaluation and relevant coursework.

Thursday's virtual session was open to Wisconsin pharmacies and pharmacists interested in learning more about the Youth Apprenticeship program and how to get involved.

"The American population and Wisconsin population have been getting older, leading to an increase in prescriptions. Plus, pharmacists are taking on more clinical tasks like testing and treatment for COVID-19, while certified pharmacy technicians have been able to assist the pharmacist with administering vaccines," said pharmacist and Pharmacy Examining Board Co-Chair Tiffany O'Hagan. "This event was a great opportunity to ensure employers know about the Youth Apprenticeship program and introduce themselves to a talent pool they may not have recognized previously."

DWD also offers a one-year pharmacy technician [Registered Apprenticeship](#). Registered Apprenticeship is an earn-while-you-learn model that connects apprentices with high-skill, high-wage employment with sponsors across the state. In addition to learning the hands-on skills of the occupation from the sponsoring employer, apprentices gain knowledge specific to the occupation through an area technical college or private training center.

Wisconsin was first in the nation with a registered apprenticeship program when it launched the program in 1911, and Youth Apprenticeship expanded the model to high school students in 1991. Registered Apprenticeship achieved a record 15,937 apprentices in 2022.

About Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship: Wisconsin Youth Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, highly successful and nationally recognized talent acquisition strategy in which employers hire high school juniors and seniors for a one or two-year Youth Apprenticeship. Employers provide mentored on-the-job training and evaluation of youth apprentices. Students pair courses related to the profession to enhance the on-the-job learning.

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 five 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.