



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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PRESS RELEASE

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Rep. Kurtz and Sen. Testin Launch Proposal to Increase Rural WI’s Dental Workforce *Bill Creates Scholarship Program for Students Who Agree to Practice in Areas with a Dentist Shortage*

Madison, WI – A new proposal in the state legislature could have rural Wisconsin residents smiling. Rep. Tony Kurtz (Wonewoc) and Sen. Patrick Testin (Stevens Point) have authored a bill that would create a scholarship program for students at the Marquette University School of Dentistry (MUSOD) -Wisconsin’s only dental school. Students who accept the scholarship would be required to practice in a dental health professional shortage area (HPSA) – one of several mostly rural spots in the state that is currently underserved – for eighteen months for every year they accept the scholarship.

“I know a lot of people who could benefit from this bill,” said Rep. Kurtz. “Four out of the five counties that I represent are underserved, and attracting more dentists would help meet demand. Additionally, I recently met a man in LaValle whose son is entering dental school – this bill could help bring his son and others back to Central Wisconsin to live, work, and raise a family.”

Sen. Testin, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services Committee pointed out that the bill is another step forward for rural Wisconsin.

“This bill is another in a series of bills put forward as part of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative. This expanding package of legislation has helped create training programs for Allied Health Professionals and Advanced Practice Clinicians in rural areas; it’s also helped expand the number of physician residencies – now we’re working on incentivizing dentists. We want to ensure that all Wisconsinites have access to quality health care professionals.”

The bill, which is co-authored by Rep. Jesse James (Altoona) and Sen. Tom Tiffany (Minocqua) is currently circulating for co-sponsorship.

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