



September 1, 2016

Sign Language Interpreter Licensure Memo

The Department of Safety and Professional Services understands the recent RID performance examination moratorium raised several questions and concerns over the licensure process for Sign Language Interpreters in Wisconsin. Hopefully we can provide clarity for anyone with questions about the process moving forward.

The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf issued a moratorium for offering their examinations in late 2015. In pursuit of alternative means for individuals to become licensed in Wisconsin, the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) has worked with the Department of Health Service's Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure an alternative path to licensure while maintaining compliance with Wisconsin licensure requirement laws pursuant to state statute chapter 440.032(2). We have determined that the Board of Evaluation of Interpreters (BEI) examination meets the legal determination as a proper licensure examination and affords a quality assessment of potential licensure candidates.

First, any previously obtained RID certification status will still be accepted by DSPS. This new process does not disqualify a person who holds a valid RID certification as meeting our requirements for licensure now or in the future.

Moving forward, the BEI examination will satisfy all exam requirements for licensure with DSPS depending on the level of BEI certification received. This includes the Sign Language Interpreters license (BEI Advanced and BEI Master Certification) and the Restricted license (BEI Basic Certification).

For anyone required to complete the Wisconsin Interpreting and Transliterating Assessment at level 2 or higher, the BEI Basic will satisfy that requirement for licensure. The Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be providing more information on the BEI Certification program for Wisconsin as it becomes available.

The BEI examination is currently in the process of becoming available. While examination logistics are determined, we understand this could be an inconvenience for anyone currently in the process of a restricted license, or someone needing to complete the licensure prior to the new testing opportunity becoming available. Any person in this situation is still able to become licensed with us if they complete the BEI examination in another jurisdiction. We know that Illinois offers the BEI examination and is the closest available offering for a Wisconsin resident. While this is not ideal, we want to make it known that there is still an available opportunity for anyone currently in the process. Please check with the Illinois board, or another jurisdiction offering the BEI for instructions on how to register for their examination.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Safety and Professional Services at:

Phone: 608-266-2112, or
Email: DSPSCredentialingCSC@wi.gov