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## DSPS Celebrates Banner Year

*Agency setting records and improving services for State of Wisconsin*

**Madison** -- This year brought many exciting developments for the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS). The department issued a record number of new licenses in 2023, brought license review times down to new lows, and entered multiple collaborations to benefit those who interact with DSPS, as well as the entire state.

“We’re licensing more professionals more quickly than ever,” said DSPS Secretary-designee Dan Hereth. “Meanwhile, outside of licensing, our other divisions continue to search for efficiencies and develop tools that help us improve our processes while meeting our commitment to public safety.”

The data tells much of the story of 2023:

- DSPS has issued more than 51,000 initial Health and Business credentials in 2023, a 44% increase over 2022
- Investments in technology and staffing brought average license review times down to 2-5 days
- Strategic restructuring and staffing additions moved legal review times from 12 weeks to under two weeks
- Plan review times remain between 14 and 23 days despite steady demand. Just a few years ago, plan reviews were regularly in the 60 to 80-day range.

In May 2023, DSPS expanded its online licensing platform, LicensE, to include Business credentialing. All Health and Business licensing and renewals now happen on this platform, which is credited with helping improve licensing times in Wisconsin. Trade licenses will be added to LicensE in early 2024.

While improving its internal systems, Wisconsin DSPS, led by Hereth, has simultaneously worked to develop relationships and enter strategic collaborations that further streamline processes for the benefit of license holders, their families, and the public.

A few examples from this year include partnering with national testing company Pearson VUE to [dramatically increase the number of sites](#) where Wisconsinites can take a Trades exam; entering [a data-sharing agreement with Michigan](#) that automates the secure exchange of information and speeds up licensing for those looking to work across the state line; collaborating with the Universities of Wisconsin and the state’s private colleges to offer limited access to DSPS’s licensing system for [facilitating faster licensing](#) of graduates in health care fields; and [shepherding an agreement](#) between state health officials,

the Wisconsin Dental Association, Marquette School of Dentistry, and the state Dentistry Examining Board that eliminates a redundant post-graduate exam for state dental school graduates.

“With our license application review times down to just a few days, there’s a limited amount of improvement we can still make to those processes,” explained Hereth. “We’re now focused on working with our stakeholders to identify inefficiencies and areas where we can further streamline processes, then strategically addressing them.”

DSPS also made significant additions to its safety toolkit this year as it continues to meet its mission of protecting the public. In 2023, DSPS:

- Oversaw the [first updates](#) to state plumbing code since 2009
- Launched a new, public-facing [fire risk tool](#) that helps state fire departments assess risk and identify vulnerable groups in their communities
- Launched an [updated version](#) of the Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (WI ePDMP) that improved data processing, upgraded patient matching capacities, and enhanced overall user experiences

Finally, DSPS made a major investment in transparency when it launched its [Occupational Licensing: By the Numbers](#) dashboard in late August. The dashboard includes profession specific information, application review averages, and annual and quarterly licensing numbers. DSPS is continuing to look at ways it can further share licensing data in ways that benefit its licensed professionals and applicants.

**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.

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