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DSPS Communications
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Wisconsin DSPS, Nursing Colleges Announce Accelerate Wisconsin Initiative

Madison, Wis. -- The Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) announced its new workforce focused *Accelerate Wisconsin* initiative on Wednesday, while also honoring the institutions partnering in the initiative.

DSPS Secretary Dan Hereth joined the deans from the colleges of nursing at Madison College, UW-Madison, and Edgewood College to announce a collaboration with participating nursing schools across the state to offer their students a faster path into the Wisconsin workforce.

“Through this partnership with state nursing schools, students are offered a pathway for taking their required national nursing exam, the NCLEX, before graduation. Starting with this graduating class,” Hereth explained at the announcement. “Think of it like the Fast Pass at an amusement park. For those students who are approved and ready to test early, this will ensure they are licensed within three business days of graduation.”

“In a time of healthcare workforce shortage, be it days, weeks, or months, moving our nursing graduates efficiently into the workforce benefits all Wisconsin communities,” said Kerri Kliminski, Dean of the Madison College School of Nursing, which hosted the announcement. “We appreciate and applaud DSPS and the Wisconsin Board of Nursing for creating a pathway to early NCLEX testing and licensure.”

The partnership provides students an option to take the NCLEX early. It is not required, and participating schools of nursing can set their own standards and eligibility requirements for which students are approved to test early.

“This collaboration makes sense because the curriculum and learning requirements are the same. The NCLEX test is the same. The only difference is we are moving the test up the licensing timeline,” said Edgewood College Associate Dean of Nursing and Health Science Programs, Quinn Mullikin. “Instead of taking it after graduation, we’re creating a pathway for students to take it early, if they are ready.”

“Our school is producing highly-skilled nurses that are in demand across Wisconsin,” added UW-Madison School of Nursing Dean Linda Scott. “New graduates will now have a more efficient but equally rigorous process from graduation and licensure testing to enter into the nursing workforce.”

The Accelerate Wisconsin Initiative encompasses multiple new DSPS efforts to streamline the path to licensure in various professions, keeping an emphasis on safety while speeding up the transition from classroom to job sites across Wisconsin. Like the partnership with nursing colleges, all Accelerate Wisconsin efforts involve reimagining historic processes, using novel collaborations and technology to get professionals into the workforce as quickly and safely as possible.

“Governor Evers and DSPS are focused on ensuring that Wisconsin has the highest-skilled, most-safe workforce in the world,” Sec. Hereth said.

While any nursing student at participating schools could take their NCLEX early, Dean Kliminski detailed some specific circumstances where this option could be especially beneficial, including military students scheduled to deploy shortly after graduation and part-time students who complete their coursework midway through the semester and would historically have had to wait until they officially graduate at the end of a semester.

“Also, students who have secured employment early. In the past, they would have to go through a process to apply for a three-month temporary license rather than expediently moving into testing and quickly becoming a fully licensed practical or registered nurse,” Dean Kliminski said.

To provide certainty to prospective employers, DSPS is providing eligible students with a letter informing employers that the students have met all licensing requirements except for graduation, and that upon certification of graduation by their school to DSPS, they will be licensed within three business days.

At the announcement, Sec. Hereth also presented separate proclamations from Governor Tony Evers to representatives from the Universities of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Wisconsin Technical College System, declaring it Nurses Week in Wisconsin.

The college and university nursing programs participating in this Accelerate Wisconsin effort are at:

Alverno College
Carroll University
Carthage College
Chippewa Valley Technical College
Edgewood College
Gateway Technical College
Madison College

Marian University
Marquette University
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
University of Wisconsin-Madison
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
Viterbo University

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 three 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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