

PRESS RELEASE—Contact DSPS Newsroom at dspnewsroom@wisconsin.gov

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Marquette, DSPS, WDA Celebrate First Dental Diploma Privilege Graduates

Madison, Wis. – Marquette School of Dentistry and its Dean, Dr. Elsbeth Kalenderian, welcomed Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary Dan Hereth and Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA) President Chris Hansen on Friday for a celebration of this year’s School of Dentistry graduates, about a quarter of whom will be joining the state workforce faster as the first ever recipients of the state’s new Dental Diploma Privilege.

“You all are going down in history. Every time you come back here for a reunion or anything else, you will be able to say you were the first. We will remind you,” Dean Kalenderian told the students. “I am grateful that all of you are remaining in Wisconsin to practice in both rural and urban areas of the state.”

Wisconsin DSPS announced the Dental Diploma Privilege last year after the Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board voted unanimously in July to make the Marquette School of Dentistry an administrator of practical examinations required to be a licensed dentist in Wisconsin. As a result, the school’s graduates who wish to get a license and practice in Wisconsin no longer have to pay for and take a one-day, post-graduate practical exam before getting their license. This Spring graduating class is the first with the opportunity to benefit from this change.

“This decision reflects the Board’s and DSPS’s understanding that the work Marquette School of Dentistry students do through the school’s curriculum and required clinical work is more rigorous and thorough than a one-day practical exam,” said Sec. Hereth, after thanking all the groups that contributed to making this diploma privilege a reality, including Marquette School of Dentistry, the Dental Examining Board, the Wisconsin Dental Association, and Wisconsin State Dental Director Dr. Russ Dunkel.

“We believe very thoroughly in the rigorous standards you have to go through to get through this school,” Hansen told the students. “We believe they have prepared you to go into practice and benefit communities across Wisconsin.”

Student Lauren Poppe will officially graduate from Marquette School of Dentistry next weekend. She already has a job lined up in a small town about 30 minutes east of Superior, the type of rural area where Wisconsin and other states are dealing with a shortage of dental professionals. A southern Wisconsin native, she says the diploma privilege made up her mind to stay and practice in her home state.

“Me and my husband had kind of considered going out of Wisconsin for a little bit, but this (the diploma privilege) kind of solidified that we did want to stay in Wisconsin, stay home around family,” she said, noting that the clinic where she will be working currently has one dentist and that her addition means they will be able to double the number of patients they can treat.

Poppe is one of about 25 graduates in the Spring class who committed to staying in Wisconsin to start their dental careers and will benefit from the privilege this first year. Both Marquette leadership and students in attendance today indicated they feel even higher numbers of students will benefit from the privilege in future graduating classes.

Ten of the 25 took time out of a busy pre-graduation week to join Dean Kalenderian, Sec. Hereth, and WDA President Hansen for today’s celebration. Sec. Hereth presented each with a letter from DSPS indicating that, thanks to this new Dental Diploma Privilege, they will receive their professional dentist license from DSPS within three days of the school notifying the department of their graduation.

For Poppe, that means she is closer to knowing the start date for her new job. She joked that, after receiving the letter, it was three days after graduation.

“I don’t have a start date on my contract. It was just whenever I get my license. I’m literally going to call them (her employer) as soon as this is done.”

About DSPS

DSPS issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers dozens of boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, runs the state fire prevention program, and maintains the award-winning 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.

About Marquette University School of Dentistry

Founded in 1894, Marquette University School of Dentistry has been a significant provider of oral health care to patients and excellent clinically based dental education to dental students and recently celebrated 125 years of providing dental education and community service. Programs are guided by dedicated faculty and practicing professionals who uphold Marquette’s vision to train highly skilled oral health care practitioners to bring top-quality dental care to urban and rural communities across the country and around the world.

As Wisconsin’s only dental school, MUSOD and its clinics throughout the State of Wisconsin serve nearly 30,000 patients with more than 110,000 patient visits from 66 of Wisconsin’s 72 counties annually and is one of the state’s largest dental Medicaid providers.

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