



Department of
Safety and Professional Services

Tony Evers, Governor
Dan Hereth, Secretary

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

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DSPS, Marquette Celebrate Second Group of Dental Diploma Privilege Graduates

Madison, Wis. – Marquette School of Dentistry and its Dean, Dr. Elsbeth Kalenderian, welcomed Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary Dan Hereth, Wisconsin Dental Association President Tom Reid and other guests on Friday for a celebration of this year’s School of Dentistry graduates, several of whom will be joining the state workforce faster thanks to Wisconsin’s first-in-the-nation Dental Diploma Privilege.

“We are proud to carry the momentum of last year’s inaugural class to receive diploma privilege with this year’s equally strong cohort,” Dr. Kalenderian said. “These soon-to-be graduates are well prepared to enter Wisconsin’s dental workforce more quickly thanks to this program and our state partners.”

Wisconsin DSPS announced the Dental Diploma Privilege in late 2023 after the Wisconsin Dentistry Examining Board voted unanimously that year to make the Marquette School of Dentistry an administrator of the practical examination required to be a licensed dentist in Wisconsin. As a result, the school’s graduates who wish to get a license and begin their practice in Wisconsin no longer have to pay for and take a one-day, post-graduate practical exam before getting their license.

“The Board felt strongly 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,” noted DSPS Sec. Hereth. “Collaborations like the Dental Diploma Privilege, which streamline licensing and encourage graduates to stay in the state while not compromising safety, have been a priority for DSPS and the administration of Governor Tony Evers.”

Dental student Austin Cook will be graduating from Marquette School of Dentistry later this month. Originally from Pocatello, Idaho, Austin is using the diploma privilege to stay in Wisconsin and start his career in Medford, in northcentral Wisconsin.

"The diploma privilege program is the main reason I am staying in Wisconsin," Cook explained. "I was able to avoid paying \$3,000-\$4,000 for another exam and will get my licensing quicker, and I look forward to being able to start working sooner. Wisconsin also has one of the better job markets for dentists. I know I will get a lot of great experience early on in my career. Marquette has provided an excellent clinical education to prepare future dentists to practice in the community. This diploma privilege is accelerating licensing for competent dentists graduating from Marquette to also help with the shortage of dental care that we are facing in Wisconsin."

Wisconsin Dental Association president, Tom Reid, DDS, came to the celebration and had encouraging words for the graduates.

"The Wisconsin Dental Association (WDA) eagerly welcomes all new Marquette graduates to the amazing profession of dentistry. For over 150 years, we at the WDA have been supporting dental students and dentists in our state and we stand ready to continue to do so as these new colleagues begin their professional lives," Reid said. "Dental licensure reform has long been an issue the WDA has championed in an effort to keep more Wisconsin trained dentists in the state. Diploma Privilege is an innovative concept to encourage talented new dentists to stay and practice in Wisconsin. As with all privileges, this requires and merits responsibilities from those to whom the privileges are conferred. I know my new colleagues recognize the significance of these responsibilities. I have said it many times, dentistry is a noble profession, filled with noble people, dedicated to noble endeavors. Again, the WDA welcomes all of our newly graduated dentists."

"The Dentistry Examining Board congratulates the entire graduating class of Marquette University School of Dentistry 2025," said Dentistry Board Chair Shaheda Govani, DDS. "For those taking advantage of the Dental Diploma Privilege option, we're excited that you are choosing to start your careers in Wisconsin. You will play a vital role in serving patients across the state, and you will provide them excellent dental care thanks to the training you received from the approved testing site at Marquette."

This spring's graduating class is the second with the opportunity to benefit from this change. Sec. Hereth presented the 16 graduates in this class taking advantage of the privilege, all of whom will begin their careers in Wisconsin, with a signed letter stating they will receive their Dentist license from the state within three days of the school notifying the department of their graduation, assuming other requirements for their credential have been met.

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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