



**DALE KOOYENGA**  
STATE SENATOR · 5<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

State Capitol · P.O. Box 7882 · Madison, WI 53707-7882 · (608) 266-2512

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March 17, 2020

Secretary-designee Andrea Palm  
WI Department of Health Services  
1 W. Wilson Street, Room 650  
Madison, WI 53703

Secretary-designee Dawn Crim  
WI Department of Safety and Professional Services  
4822 Madison Yards Way  
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Secretaries-designee Palm and Crim,

In this time of public health crisis, I want to pass along information I recently learned from state attorneys about the authority granted to officials such as yourselves, both in times of a declared emergency and otherwise, to ease anticipated shortages of health care professionals and those in other occupations that will be important to address the present situation.

It has come to my attention that the state has the ability during an emergency to grant reciprocal credentials to providers from other states that may not have more stringent licensing requirements than Wisconsin. I ask you to exercise these powers and issue a public statement clarifying that licenses from all states will be honored.

Furthermore, state law allows the credentials of someone who might be retired or may have left the profession up to ten years ago to re-enter practice if they left the profession in good standing. This is an opportunity to offer the chance for retired or dormant health care professionals to serve during a difficult time when their service would be very valuable. I request that you make the public and our health care providers aware so that they are given the opportunity to assist.

State statutes contain a 60-day application completion rule that attempts to hold DSPS to a reasonable timeline for completing an application. However, the statute is weak and often ignored. In order to mitigate the supply of trained professionals in all occupations becoming a bottleneck during this crisis, I strongly advise this timeline be strictly enforced. In addition, all pending medical-related licenses should be approved unless there are significant concerns relating to the applicant's qualifications.

Related to this request is the fact that state law states that DSPS cannot ask for extraneous documentation than what is required when reviewing applications for credentials. I would like to see this statute followed closely and that no more documentation is requested than what is absolutely necessary, particularly pertaining to an applicant's legal history not directly relevant to the profession for offenses that occurred five or more years in the past.

To loosely borrow a phrase from a former secretary of Defense, "You go to war with the army you have, not the army you might want or wish to have at a later time." In our war against this virus, I request Wisconsin

increase the number of individuals that can service our sick by recognizing measures must be taken to increase the supply of health care professionals. I understand quality care must be a focus, and I do not recommend any measure that would provide a significant tradeoff in in that regard, but under the circumstances the quantity of health care professionals in practice is a key concern.

I am willing to introduce agreed upon legislation to further assist in our efforts to address this public health crisis. I will continue to listen to the experts from our health community and our constituents across the state to continue to work on ideas for addressing these issues.

Respectfully,  
Dale

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale P. Kooyenga". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dale P. Kooyenga  
State Senator  
5<sup>th</sup> Senate District