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Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 159 *Assembly Committee on Rural Development* April 6, 2021

Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and speak in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 159, which is legislation that will make it easier for out-of-state physicians to serve as camp doctors here in Wisconsin. I would like to thank Senator Felzkowski for working with me on this important legislation.

There is nothing quite like a Wisconsin summer. Our many lakes, streams, and forests allow our state to offer some of the best outdoor recreational opportunities in the world and make Wisconsin a great place to spend a week or two away at camp. Kids come from all around the world to attend summer camps in Wisconsin. These camps are located in all corners of the state and are an important part of the state and local economy.

Recreational activities carry the risk of injury, and camp activities are no exception. Many summer camps rely on volunteers who give a few weeks of their summer to serve as a camp doctor. Camp doctors ensure the safety of both campers and staff. While the vast majority of injuries treated by a camp doctor are minor (i.e. rashes, twisted ankles), having a doctor on hand provides an extra level of care that should be encouraged.

Many physicians who volunteer as camp doctors are licensed in another state. Current law requires these very capable doctors to obtain a temporary license from the State of Wisconsin, even though they are only volunteering for few weeks. Many of the requirements to receive this temporary licensure are very time-consuming, so camps are finding it harder to find physicians who are willing to go through this lengthy process just to volunteer for a short time. Some camp doctors have said that it is more work to obtain the temporary license than to work at the camp itself.

AB 159 seeks to solve this problem by allowing a physician licensed outside of the Wisconsin to practice at a camp in Wisconsin for up to 90 working days in a year. A physician operating under this exemption would only be permitted to treat campers and staff. Under the bill as drafted, the physician must be licensed in another state or territory of the United States or a foreign country or province where the licensure standards are substantially equivalent to those in Wisconsin to qualify for this exemption. At the request of the Medical Examining Board, we have introduced a simple amendment that narrows this exemption to only the United States and Canada. We have also introduced another simple amendment at the request of DSPS that allows the emergency rules promulgated under this legislation to remain in effect until 2023.

Members of the committee, I ask for your support of this legislation and thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.