



March 15, 2024

Senator Eric Wimberger
Co-chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
PO Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Representative Robert Wittke
Co-chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
PO Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Dear Senator Wimberger and Representative Wittke:

In their December 2023, Administration of Professional Credentials report, the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) acknowledged much progress at the Department of Safety and Professional Services' Division of Professional Credential Processing (DPCP) over the past two years. The LAB also made several recommendations that it believed would enable the department to drive further improvement in credentialing operations, and I want to update the committee on the department's related efforts.

As you know, the department has been engaged in an agency-wide technology modernization effort. Staff indicated during the auditing process that part of this effort included a comprehensive review of all related standard operating procedures (SOPs). Current credentialing operations are fully and formally outlined in a comprehensive library of SOPs and other policy documents. The work to update this library was ongoing during the phased rollout of LicensE, which was not complete during the auditing process but has since concluded for the Division of Professional Credential Processing (DPCP) and continues for agency operations in other divisions. All DPCP SOPs have now been reviewed, updated, or retired to reflect current operations.

However, SOPs are living documents and, as such, are under constant evaluation and consideration. Adjustments are made as necessary to optimize investments in technology and staff. Further, DPCP leadership now circulates a weekly update to all staff when an SOP or policy has changed to ensure that all staff are aware of updates to SOPs or departmental policies.

Further, the DPCP 2024 strategic plan maps out the development of a comprehensive library of work guides for each credential and/or profession to ensure that staff have current and detailed reference guides to consult when processing applications. This library will replace legacy documents that no longer accurately reflect current technologies and processes employed by DPCP or the department.

The strategic plan also outlines expectations for an expanded credentialing training program. DPCP has already developed and implemented a new training pipeline for new employees and requires all staff to complete refresher training once per quarter. These trainings cover comprehensive DPCP operations and highlights improvements,

adjustments, and ongoing or emerging areas of focus. This ensures that all staff understand what is working well, what has been changed in an effort to realize greater improvement, and what is undergoing further review or evaluation for potential future adjustment.

The department is also continuously evaluating and updating department-wide policies. Recent updates include a new refund policy, which was published on February 2, 2024. All DPCP staff were trained during team meetings, and the policy is included in onboarding training for all new employees.

The department also reviewed operations related to Social Security numbers and other confidential information and published a new policy regarding use of personal identifying information on February 2, 2024. All DPCP staff were trained during team meetings, and the policy is included in onboarding training for all new employees.

The department is also evaluating our overall engagement in the department-wide technology modernization effort. This includes monitoring current contracts and statements of work as well as identifying future improvements that may require vendor procurement and management. The department is committed to negotiating reasonably with service providers and to ensuring that projects with external service providers are completed satisfactorily and in accordance with established terms and expectations. The department follows all protocols and processes required by the Department of Administration and established in agency SOPs. Because the department has implemented a customized third-party cloud-based credentialing platform offered by Salesforce, ongoing engagements with technology service providers will remain critical to current agency operations and any future expansions of service or functionality.

However, these third-party technologies offer sophisticated data analysis tools, which the department is increasingly leveraging to generate insights that inform operational decisions. The Salesforce platform enables DPCP to gather data and glean insights about staff activity and its relationship to overall DPCP performance and measurable outcomes.

Expanded performance data collection and analysis is part of the DPCP's 2024 strategic plan. Currently, DPCP meets monthly to specifically review performance data, to track those assessments against goals, and to streamline ongoing data collection to optimize workflows. DPCP leadership is building staff data collection and analysis capability, and next month all team leads and supervisors will complete a Salesforce report training.

The department recognizes the value of data-driven decision making, which is why this performance and broader credentialing data is informing budget forecasting and planning. Expansion of data collection and analysis will continue to be a priority for the department and will be reflected in future budget requests, per the final recommendation from LAB.

Data collection and analysis also enables the department to communicate valuable information to stakeholders. The department uses performance data to build visualizations on the agency performance dashboard, where stakeholders can find information that can help them plan and manage their license applications.

Earlier this year, the department expanded the agency performance dashboard and added additional visualizations. Work is underway to further enhance and expand communications to further benefit stakeholders across the professions and industries regulated by the department. Further, new communications specific to workforce expansion efforts and impacts are currently in development and will be available this summer. As more department operations are migrated to LicensE, the state's cloud-based occupational licensing platform, further insights, visualizations, and communications will be possible.

Thank you for your interest in the department and for your support of the licensed workforce. These individuals provide critical services that support the health, safety, and well-being of all the people of Wisconsin, and the department is proud to support them and the industries in which they work. That is why DSPS will continue to advocate for the resources necessary to maintain and build on recent credentialing modernization and improvement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Hereth", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dan Hereth
Secretary-designee