



JESSIE RODRIGUEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 21ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**AB 558: Updating Respiratory Care Practitioner Licensing
Testimony of State Representative Jessie Rodriguez
Assembly Committee on Health**

January 7, 2020

Good morning,

Chairman Sanfelippo and committee members, thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on Assembly Bill 558, legislation that will update our laws as it relates to the practice of respiratory care in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has nearly 3,000 licensed respiratory care practitioners (RCPs) providing care to thousands of residents for a variety of respiratory diseases including asthma, COPD, lung cancer and pediatric asthma. All four diseases have risen in recent years.

Licensing for RCPs is outlined in state law but our statutes surrounding this profession have not been updated in several years and in some instances have not been looked at since 1991.

Thousands of patients rely on the vital care that RCPs provide and it is important that our state statutes are current to guarantee RCPs can continue providing this critical care while maintaining the high standards their patients have come to expect.

This bill simply aims to ensure state statutes mirror changes in the respiratory healthcare setting with three specific changes.

First, the bill will eliminate the temporary RCP certificate created in 1991 when temporary licenses were needed to allow RCPs to continue practicing while awaiting the results of the certification exam. The results are immediately tabulated now. Furthermore, when RCPs go to apply for licensure upon



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completion of the exam, it is unclear if they require a temporary license or the official certification. Eliminating the temporary license will provide clarity.

Second, the bill updates the statute to include the RCP examination name, the “Therapist Multiple-Choice Examination by the National Board for Respiratory Care.” This is the current test used to become a RCP.

Lastly, seven technical college locations and two four-year universities offer respiratory care curriculum. The bill will ensure that Wisconsin-based institutions that provide respiratory care curriculum will fall under the proper accreditation qualifications without any disparity.

This legislation is simple but important. It will ensure that RCPs can continue to provide the respiratory care that is vital to many Wisconsin residents. It is time to ensure our statutes properly reflect changes in the respiratory healthcare setting. I encourage your support for this legislation.

Thank you.



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: January 7, 2020
RE: **Testimony on Assembly Bill 558**
TO: The Assembly Committee on Health
FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

Thank you members of the Assembly Committee on Health for accepting my testimony on Assembly Bill 558.

According to the American Association for Respiratory Care, there are roughly 3,000 licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCPs) in Wisconsin. These practitioners perform quality respiratory healthcare to patients in hospitals, physician's offices, and outpatient clinics who are suffering from pediatric and adult asthma, COPD, and lung cancer.

Wisconsin statutes outline accreditation and education standards for these practitioners and have not been updated in several years. In order to ensure that these healthcare providers continue to perform quality care, minor updates are needed.

Assembly Bill 558 will make the following changes to properly reflect current standards in the respiratory healthcare setting:

- Eliminate the temporary Respiratory Care Practitioner certificate created in 1991 when temporary licenses were needed to allow RCPs to continue practicing while awaiting test results that were tabulated manually.
- Update the Respiratory Care Practitioner examination name to "Therapist Multiple-Choice Examination by the National Board for Respiratory Care," the current test used to become a RCP.
- Update accreditation qualifications for Wisconsin-based institutions that provide respiratory care curriculum.

Thank you again for listening to my testimony and I hope that you will join me in supporting this bill.



Date: Tuesday, January 07, 2020

To: Assembly Committee on Health

From: Ron Pasewald, President, Wisconsin Society for Respiratory Care

Re: **Testimony in Support of AB 558**

According to American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC), there are almost 3,000 licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners in Wisconsin. These Wisconsin licensed Respiratory Care Practitioners (RCP) ensure respiratory therapy services to patients in any care setting are performed by RCPs who meet the highest standards of accredited education and competency WI requires to render such care.

According to the CDC and American Lung Association, Wisconsin is experiencing an increase in the following lung disease categories:

- 132,013 children with pediatric asthma
- 460,277 adults with asthma
- 158,000 diagnosed with COPD
- 4,230 with lung cancer

In an effort to ensure these professional healthcare providers continue to perform necessary and quality care; minor updates to select outdated statutes are necessary. Therefore, this legislation would make the following modifications to Chapter 448 of the state statutes.

- Eliminates the “temporary” RCP certificate created in 1991 when temporary licenses were necessary for recent graduates awaiting manual exam score results
- Updates the RCP examination name from “National Board for Respiratory Care’s Certified Respiratory Technician Exam” to “Therapist Multiple-Choice Examination by the National Board for Respiratory Care”
- Updates accreditation qualifications for Wisconsin-based institutions with respiratory care curriculum

We encourage the Assembly Health Committee to vote AB 558 out of its committee, just as the Senate Committee did on October 30 with a unanimous 5-0 bipartisan vote. If these updates are passed into law, it will ensure quality and continuity of care, as well as an additional tool in streamlining a qualified respiratory care practitioner workforce in Wisconsin. Thank you.