



ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

August 17th, 2023

**Secretary Mario Treto, Jr.
Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation
555 West Monroe St.
Chicago, IL, 60661**

Dear Secretary Treto,

It has come to my attention from Community Behavioral Health Providers that there have been issues with clinicians and staff obtaining their licensure with the Illinois Department of Financial & Professional Regulation. My office has been in contact with these providers who had a multitude of issues, through no fault of the applicants.

One provider has had five cases. One included an applicant applying to be a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and realizing her application appeared to have been lost. She called the Department regularly to check in. She was actually told to stop calling and since then, she has resubmitted her application. A similar applicant said it took six months to be approved for testing with their LCSW license application. Also, one clinician applied in February to be a Licensed Professional Counselor and still has yet to hear anything, even after attempting to reach IDFPD through email and phone calls.

Another provider had staff who submitted her application for her License in Social Work in May and was told in August after calling that the system was down and they could not see her application. A week later, the supervisor told her their processing team was behind and they would send an inquiry that could take up to 21 days to respond. Besides the lengthy response time, this has major consequences and could affect her ability to work with her clients because of requirements from the Division of Substance Use Prevention & Recovery if the issue is not resolved by September.

Yet another applicant submitted all required paperwork and payment for her License in Social Work the first week of May and received no correspondence. Upon inquiry in as to the status of the application in June, July, and again in August, she was told the application was lost, but to not resubmit because if the application was found it would delay her processing.

This lack of competency from IDFPR is unacceptable. A 2021 NAMI report shows that 1.754 million adults in Illinois have a mental health condition and 4,873,491 people in Illinois live in communities without enough mental health professionals. A 2022 Department of Public Health report showed 3,013 fatalities due to opioid overdose in Illinois in 2021. With the influx of synthetic opioids in our country, a nationwide mental health crisis, and a third of our state not having proper access to mental health professionals, this is not the time to unnecessarily delay qualified candidates from obtaining their licensure in community behavioral health. The issues these professionals are dealing with as a result of the failures at IDFPR are causing delays in employment, loss of employment opportunities, job vacancies which in turn leave those most in need of critical mental health care without services.

We respectfully inquire as to what the core issues at the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation are that are causing these delays. In particular, we want to know how applications are getting lost, why the process is taking so long to respond to applications, and why there is a serious lack of communication between the department and applicants regarding these issues and the status of their applications.

Part of IDFPR's mission is to ensure competent professionals are licensed to provide services to the public. I hope the Department addresses these issues with the urgency they demand and look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,



Jackie Haas
House Assistant Minority Leader
79th District



Brad Stephens
House Assistant Minority Leader
20th District



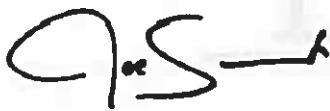
Tony McCombie
House Minority Leader
89th District



Steve Reick
State Representative
63rd District



Norine Hammond
Deputy House Minority Leader
94th District



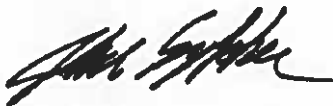
Joe Sosnowski
State Representative
69th District



Dan Swanson
State Representative
71st District



Jed Davis
State Representative
75th District




John Egofske
State Representative
82nd District



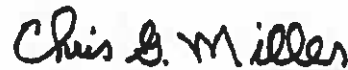
Bill Hauter
State Representative
87th District



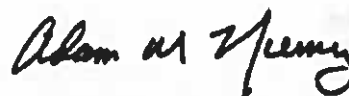
Dan Caulkins
State Representative
88th District



Travis Weaver
State Representative
93rd District



Chris Miller
State Representative
101st District



Adam Niemerg
State Representative
102nd District



Brad Halbrook
State Representative
107th District



Wayne Rosenthal
State Representative
108th District



Charlie Meier
House Assistant Minority Leader
109th District



Blaine Wilhour
State Representative
110th District



Paul Jacobs
State Representative
118th District




Amy Elik
State Representative
111th District



Kevin Schmidt
State Representative
114th District



David Friess
State Representative
115th District



Dave Severin
State Representative
116th District



Patrick Windhorst
House Republican Floor Leader
117th District