

Sen. Cowles, Rep. Kerkman: DHS investigations of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King (2012-2016)

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MADISON – Today, the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) released a report in which it reviewed investigations of incident reports and complaints related to the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King (King), which is overseen by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). These investigations were conducted from 2012 through 2016 by the state Department of Health Services (DHS).

DHS conducted a total of 90 investigations based on incident reports and complaints that it received from 2012 through 2016 involving the four skilled nursing facilities at King. Most of these investigations involved allegations of resident abuse (41.1 percent) or the quality of care (32.2 percent). DHS substantiated allegations in 40 of the 90 investigations (44.4 percent) it conducted. DHS issued 22 citations to address deficient King practices or policies that it had identified in 11 investigations.

“Our state’s veterans and spouses living at the Veterans Home at King deserve nothing but the best care. As co-chair of the Joint Audit Committee, I will work to ensure that DVA meets that goal. In particular, I am pleased that DVA filled the vacant position of Administrator of the agency’s Division of Veterans Homes,” said Representative Kerkman (R-Salem).

Information about incident reports and complaints investigated by DHS from 2012 through 2016 was not included in LAB's earlier evaluation of King (report 17-14) because DHS indicated it could not provide the information to LAB. In 2017, LAB submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to obtain data on such investigations of King. Nearly two years later in 2019, LAB was provided the information it included in the report issued today (report 19-14).

"This concludes what has been a long effort to audit the Veterans Home at King. I want to thank our Congressional Delegation for assisting us in obtaining the necessary information to publish this report and I hope to follow-up soon with DVA to get an update on the status of recommendations made in these audits," said Senator Cowles (R-Green Bay).

Copies of LAB's report (report 19-14) may be obtained from its website at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818. Report concerns related to state government activities to LAB by calling the toll-free hotline at 1-877-FRAUD-17.