

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Bill to cultivate next generation of veterans health professionals clears House and Senate, heads to President's desk

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The House of Representatives has passed U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's bipartisan *Veterans'-Specific Education for Tomorrow's Health Professionals Act of 2019 (VET HP Act)*. The bill passed the U.S. Senate last week and now heads to the President's desk to be signed into law.

The shortage of Veterans Health Administration (VHA) physicians and medical professionals has been a major problem for VA medical centers across the country, forcing VA facilities to provide care with fewer staff than are medically necessary to properly care for our nation's veterans.

The *VET HP Act* would direct the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) to create a one-year pilot program in at least five VA medical centers for pre-med students to gain clinical observation experience, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of veterans' specific health needs and experiences, while creating a viable pipeline of future medical professionals in the process.

"We have a shared responsibility to do right by our veterans and that includes making sure our doctors and nurses are trained and well-equipped to deliver the highest quality care to those who have served," **said Senator Baldwin.** "Students interested in a medical career need better access to training opportunities, and our VA medical centers need to attract a workforce with more exposure to the VA

system at an earlier stage in their education in order to better understand veterans' specific health needs. I am proud my bipartisan legislation has passed both chambers of Congress because it will help train the next generation of health professionals and ensure our veterans receive the care they deserve.”

The *VET HP Act* previously passed the House of Representatives in March 2019 after being introduced by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-OH). The *VET HP Act* passed the U.S. Senate in December 2020 as a part of a broad veterans legislative package and had to be voted on again in the House. This bill has been endorsed by the American Legion and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA).

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