

Sen. Jacque: “Heroes for Healthcare” clears Assembly

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MADISON, WI... With medical resources increasingly strained, military veterans trained in healthcare may again answer the call to serve under a proposal that passed the State Assembly today.

State Sen. André Jacque (R-De Pere), co-author of the proposal with Rep. Rob Summerfield (R-Bloomer), said the bipartisan initiative is modeled after a program in Virginia that has deployed hundreds of skilled veterans to the medical work force and helped relieve pressure on the healthcare system.

“This program provides a perfect opportunity to attract highly skilled, experienced workers into a field that is in very high demand,” Sen. Jacque said. “At the same time, it provides opportunities for transitioning veterans, who often have a difficult time translating their training and experience into civilian healthcare employment.”

Under current state law, a recent military medical personnel member must obtain a license prior to practicing certain skilled health services, taking away their ability to immediately apply their military training and experience to civilian life.

“This legislation will reverse that,” Sen. Jacque said. “It will enable those veterans who recently served in a military medical assignment to practice under appropriate supervision while they seek the required education and credentials of their role.”

Sen. Jacque said this initiative builds upon the efforts of Heroes for Healthcare, a Wisconsin non-profit that assists veterans in finding healthcare employment developed by the Wisconsin Military Medics & Corpsmen (Wis-MAC) program, modeled after the award winning State of Virginia Military Medics and Corpsmen Program.

“According to the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, approximately 3,000 military service members return annually to Wisconsin, a majority to their communities of entrance,” Sen. Jacque said. “Healthcare holds promise as a target industry with jobs for transitioning military veterans, given healthcare’s high number of job openings due to the great need for medical care, and staff retirements.”

The measure (Assembly Bill 720/Senate Bill 688) is also up for a vote today in the Senate Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs and Constitution and Federalism; it must then move through the full Senate, at which point it can be signed by the Governor to become law.