

Sen. Jacque: “Heroes for Healthcare” signed into law

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MADISON, WI... With medical resources increasingly strained, military veterans trained in healthcare will soon again be able to answer the call to serve, to the benefit of patients statewide, under a proposal signed into law 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. Sen. Jacque’s bill passed unanimously in both legislative chambers and garnered more than 30 bill co-sponsors.

“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 prior state law, a recent military medical personnel member was required to 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 new law will reverse that,” Sen. Jacque said. “It will enable those veterans who recently served in a military medical assignment to utilize their skills and practice under appropriate supervision while they seek the required additional education and credentials of their role.” The legislation was supported by a broad

coalition of healthcare groups including the Wisconsin Hospital Association and Wisconsin Nurses Association, veterans organizations, postsecondary institutions, and many others.

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](#)) was signed into law as 2021 Wisconsin Act 158 at a ceremony at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove. Sen. Jacque was unable to attend due to today’s Senate floor session. “I am extremely excited that such an impactful program for our veterans and healthcare system can now be put to use in Wisconsin,” concluded Sen. Jacque.

Senator André Jacque represents Northeast Wisconsin’s First Senate District, consisting of Door and Kewaunee Counties and portions of Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, and Outagamie counties.