

Michels campaign: Maclver Institute highlights DVA mismanagement of Union Grove Veterans Home

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UNION GROVE, Wisc. - Today the Maclver Institute published a detailed [report](#) on the litany of failures by Tony Evers' Department of Veterans Affairs that have led to massive, ongoing staff shortages and tragic consequences for the residents of Veterans Home at Union Grove.

“The incompetence of the Evers administration has touched nearly every state agency,” said Tim Michels. **“To his shame, he has failed the veterans of this state and he refuses to take responsibility for his continued incompetence.”**

Key takeaways from the Maclver report are:

1. Evers' appointees have been unable to develop a plan in response to increasingly urgent alarm bells about staffing and care crises
2. Alarming personal stories demonstrate the safety of staff and veterans has been jeopardized by poor management
3. DVA relies on agency temp staff - paying \$95 an hour for an aide - to fill vacancies, but still forces overtime on their workers
4. Veterans have fled the home; the census at Union Grove is half what it was in 2018
5. DVA wants to use ARPA funds earmarked for Wisconsin Veterans in state homes to demolish buildings

Maclver's report outlines staffing shortages that have significantly worsened during Evers' time in office. The staff vacancy rate is currently an astounding 54%. Yet his

appointees to DVA leadership were woefully [unprepared](#) to address the problem, and have failed to develop a plan in four long years:

“When Evers took office, state Veterans Homes faced similar challenges to other nursing homes across the country, but his top leadership appointees did not grasp those difficulties even at a basic level.”

“As time went on, Kolar became more savvy at explaining away Union Grove’s troubles as staffing troubles in long-term care, the pandemic, and a competitive employment market, while the staffing crisis grew well beyond the COVID shield she used to hide a problem she clearly was not equipped to solve.”

Patients, family and staff have sent numerous concerned emails to DVA leadership about staffing levels and turnover, forced overtime, and patient care. The emotion in [these letters](#) is heartbreaking.

DVA has received nearly \$20 million in federal stimulus funds. Yet there is still no solution in sight for the residents of Union Grove.

“All those federal funds, multiple months of staffing assistance from the USDVA, and almost 4 years later and they still have not developed a staffing plan to stabilize the workforce at Union Grove.”

Despite an urgent and deadly staff shortage, DVA plans to use millions of federal dollars to demolish a few buildings on the campus.

“The most urgent problems at Union Grove are not a few old cottages on the grounds, it is the care of veterans in the home. The fact that Evers’ hand-picked leaders at DVA can’t see that, even after nearly 4 years, tells us everything we need to know about his leadership, and theirs.”