

Dept. of Veterans Affairs: Secures more than \$700,000 for veteran long-term care

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MADISON—This week, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) was awarded grants totaling \$732,628 from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to support the hiring and retention of nursing staff at WDVA's three veterans long-term care homes.

“Our veterans homes provide dignified, high-quality care to our state’s veterans and their spouses,” said WDVA Secretary-designee James Bond. “Nursing homes across the nation are struggling due to workforce shortages in a post-pandemic landscape. To maintain exceptional care standards, we must invest in recruiting qualified and caring nursing staff. These grants will fund a top priority for WDVA—making our long-term care homes the gold star for veteran care.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Wisconsin’s decline in nursing staff is more severe than the national level, with an 18.3 percent decrease in staff at nursing care facilities throughout the state from February 2029 to May 2023, compared to 11.6 percent nationally.

Nursing and Hiring Retention Grants were awarded to all three of Wisconsin’s Veterans Homes—King, Union Grove and Chippewa Falls. The additional dollars will fund many initiatives for recruitment and retention in a competitive hiring market, including:

- **Sign-on Bonuses** – Grant dollars will subsidize \$2,000 sign-on bonuses for direct care staff – RN, LPN, and CNA.
- **Employee Referral Bonus** - Eligible employees can receive up to \$1,500 for

recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified staff.

- **Tuition Assistance** – The tuition assistance will help cover the costs of obtaining a degree and/or licensure in healthcare or enrollment in a Certified Medication aid training program, which will aid recruitment and retention.
- Investment in technology that makes information sharing easier with residents, their families, and other staff members.

This is the second year in a row that WDVA has applied for and received these grants.