



THE AMERICAN LEGION

DEPARTMENT OF WISCONSIN

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STATE COMMANDER: ‘TERMINATING WISCONSIN HOMELESS VETERANS HOUSING PROGRAM UNACCEPTABLE’ State Legislature Needs To Immediately Address Funding Issue Before Kicking Veterans Out Of Homeless Program

(Portage, Wis.) – The Wisconsin American Legion is calling for immediate action from state legislative leaders to save Wisconsin’s homeless veterans housing program. The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) announced last Friday that the pending loss of federal funding would eliminate the state’s homeless veterans housing programs at the King and Union Grove medical facilities. The fate of a similar program at Chippewa Falls remains uncertain.

Forty-seven homeless veterans will be immediately affected and eventually moved from the two facilities to locations to be determined. None of the state veteran’s facilities will be accepting new homeless veterans.

“The state’s budget books are open and our veterans, especially our homeless veterans, need immediate attention,” said Laurel Clewell, the newly-elected state commander of the Wisconsin American Legion. “The loss of funding and the lack of a remedial plan from the state is unacceptable.”

The WDVA letter, dated July 14, stated that in the absence of federal funding for the Veteran Housing and Recovery Programs at King and Union Grove “the possibility (of) WDVA solely funding King and Union Grove VHRPs beyond December 2017 is not feasible.”

The prospect of the homeless veterans problem **possibly** getting worse was also addressed in the WDVA letter when it **referenced** the only remaining homeless facility at Chippewa Falls. “Federal authorities have *conditionally* funded our Chippewa Falls program and it will remain open assuming final funding approval.”

WAL commander Clewell said she is concerned about what she calls an “open-ended, half-baked” solution for these soon-to-be displaced veterans – a solution that calls on “Veteran service organizations and non-profit partners” to assume care and housing for these veterans, according to the WDVA letter.

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“Making homeless veterans homeless again is not a solution,” said Clewell. “These are men and women who have served this country and its taxpayers honorably, risked their lives and now we can’t put a roof over their heads in state facilities dedicated to veterans care? Veterans deserve better.”

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The Wisconsin American Legion is the state’s largest veterans’ service organization with over 60,000 members and 507 posts in communities across Wisconsin serving troops, veterans and youth since 1919. For more information on the Legion’s programs and membership, please visit www.wilegion.org.