

[mn.gov/mdva/](http://mn.gov/mdva/)

**AT A GLANCE**

- Provide six major program areas under two divisions, each with numerous veteran services including:
  - Long-term, Skilled nursing and Domiciliary care
  - Adult Day Center and resources for caregivers
  - Education and employment services
  - Federal VA Claims and outreach services
  - Homeless Veteran prevention and assistance services
  - State benefits (State Soldiers Assistance Program)
- Operates 5 State Veterans Homes and 3 State Veterans Cemeteries
- Serve more than 327,000 Veterans in Minnesota
- Employ approximately 1,400 staff statewide

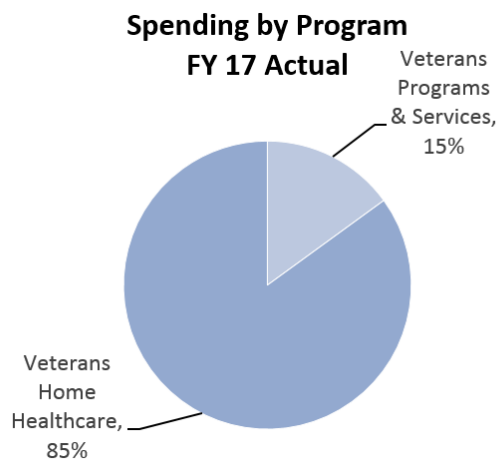
**PURPOSE**

The mission of Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is “Dedicated to serving Minnesota Veterans and their families.” We are a “post wartime agency” and were created by the 1943 state Legislature to consolidate the services provided to service members, and since 2007, we have operated the Minnesota Veterans Homes. Today, there are more than 327,000 veterans in Minnesota (about six percent of the state’s population).

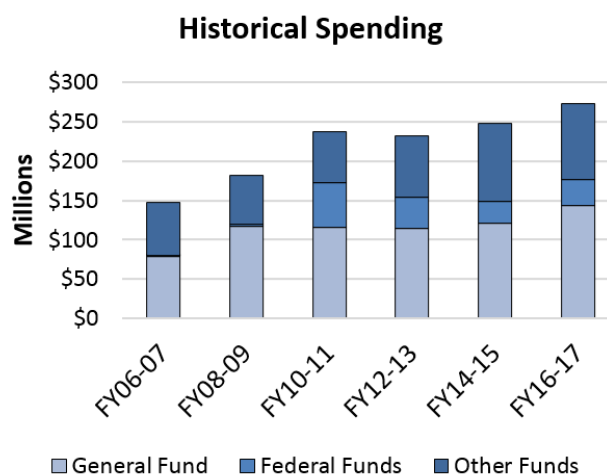
Since 9/11, approximately 75,000 Minnesotans have been discharged from active duty and more than 45,000 have served in a combat zone. Veterans face many challenges including translating their military skills and experiences to civilian occupations, unemployment and underemployment, and short- and long-term medical issues resulting from their military duty. In addition, many veterans and their families experience both mental fatigue and physical injuries associated with military deployments. Finally, approximately 23 percent of the state’s population aged 65 and older are veterans, many with unique long-term care needs.

MDVA exists to fulfill the needs of these veterans and their families by providing innovative programs and services to maximize their quality of life, while monitoring and adapting to emerging needs. In doing so, MDVA contributes to achieving the statewide outcomes of: **All Minnesotans have optimal health, Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals, and Strong and stable families and communities.**

**BUDGET**



Source: Budget Planning & Analysis System (BPAS)



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

MDVA activities, as a whole, were funded approximately 52% from the general fund, 12% from federal funds and 36% from special revenue funds in the FY2016-17 biennium.

The Program & Services program receives a majority of its funding from the general fund. Program-specific federal funding is also received for cemetery development & maintenance and for the State approval of higher education institutions.

The Veterans Home Healthcare program is funded through general fund appropriations, resident maintenance fees, VA per diem, Medicare and other reimbursements. In recent years, a portion of the federal funds were used to complete the construction of two new 100-bed skilled nursing buildings on the Minneapolis campus. In addition, the Legislature has approved state-funding for the construction of three new state veterans homes. The historical spending graph reflects the following breakdown:

- A general fund appropriation of \$110 million in the FY2016-17 biennium was received and transferred to the special revenue or other fund. The graph above reflects the expenditure of these funds out of the general fund in order to show its source of funding.
- An additional \$92 million of receipts was received from the Federal VA Administration for veteran full and partial per diem, Medicare reimbursements for Medicare Part A, B & D, and receipts from resident maintenance fees and other reimbursements. The graph above reflects the expenditure of these funds in the other funds category.
- \$33 million of federal grant funds were received and expended for two new skilled nursing buildings, Building 21 & 22, on the Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis Campus. MDVA anticipates the receipt of additional federal grant funding for the construction of three new Minnesota state veterans homes to be located in Bemidji, Montevideo, and Preston.

## STRATEGIES

We strive to enhance the lives of those we serve through the development and implementation of services that are tailored to meet the current, ongoing and future needs of veterans and their families. We do this through two divisions: **Programs & Services** and **Veterans Health Care** (Minnesota State Veterans Homes).

Many veterans are not aware of the benefits that they have earned through their military service. **The Programs & Services Division** collaborates with its partners in the veteran's services community to assist veterans in obtaining these benefits. Examples include securing or assisting in the provision of financial, educational and medical benefits. Additionally, there are an estimated 253 veterans without safe, stable or affordable housing on any given night in Minnesota (<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2016-PIT-Estimate-of-Homeless-Veterans-by-State.pdf>). By working with partners and stakeholders through its Homeless Veteran Registry (<https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/homelessnessandprevention/homelessveteranregistry.jsp>), MDVA works to identify and develop housing plans for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Finally, our Programs & Services Division and partners provide resources for financial, family, and mental health counseling, as well as operating three Veterans cemeteries and coordinating funeral honors benefits.

For more information, visit: <https://mn.gov/mdva/resources/>

**The Veterans Health Care Division** currently operates five Minnesota Veterans Homes. Located in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Luverne, Minneapolis, and Silver Bay. MDVA works to ensure that veterans and their families have options for meeting their long-term skilled nursing and care needs while providing the highest-quality care. The homes offer multiple long-term care options including 24-hour Skilled Nursing, Domiciliary, and Adult Day Care. The homes also offer specialty care units for Alzheimer's and dementia, as well as dental care, physical rehabilitation, work therapy, transportation, chemical dependency, psychological, spiritual, and recreational services to improve the health and quality of life of its residents. In addition, MDVA is currently working with

community partners in the development of plans for three new Minnesota Veterans Homes to expand our capacity and geographic presence.

For more information, visit: <https://mn.gov/mdva/homes/>

For more information, see the 2017 Annual Report for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs ([https://mn.gov/mdva/assets/2017-mdva-annual-report-accessible\\_tcm1066-327252.pdf](https://mn.gov/mdva/assets/2017-mdva-annual-report-accessible_tcm1066-327252.pdf)).

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Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from:

- Minn. Stat. 196 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/196>),
- Minn. Stat. 197 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/197>), and
- Minn. Stat. 198 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/198>).

**Program: Programs & Services**[mn.gov/mdva/](http://mn.gov/mdva/)**AT A GLANCE**

- Serve veterans of all ages and wartime periods by:
  - Acting as the agent of a resident of the state having a claim against the United States for benefits arising out of or by reason of service in the armed forces
  - Administering the State Soldiers' Assistance Fund
  - Working to provide Veterans with a seamless transition from their military service through approved education and training programs, resulting in a career with permanent, full-time employment
  - Providing outreach and state-wide benefits advocacy to include services on tribal reservations
  - Providing burial and perpetual care for veterans and their eligible dependents in three state Veterans' cemeteries
  - Preventing and ending Veteran homelessness
- Work closely with community, state and federal partners
- Approximately 100 employees throughout the state

**PURPOSE & CONTEXT**

The mission of the Programs and Services Division (PSD) is to meet the needs of Minnesota Veterans and their families by providing proven and innovative programs and services, helping to maximize their quality of life and provide final resting places that commemorate their service and honor their sacrifice to our Nation.

Minnesota is experiencing an increased demand for services due to both the aging of the veteran population and as a result of 17 years of continuous conflict and ongoing military operations worldwide. For example, in 2014 the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) filed 1,841 state and federal benefits claims, while in 2016, MDVA filed 2,209 of the same benefits claims. Burials at our State Veterans Cemeteries increased from 418 in 2014 to 621 in 2017. MDVA's work with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) C.O.R.E. served 509 clients in 2014 and 748 in 2017. It should be noted that the veteran population in the state of Minnesota dropped from about 369,000 to 337,000 during the same period. There is no foreseeable change to the military situation, so it is expected that demand for services will continue to increase in the coming months and years. Additionally, the state and federal goal of bringing an end to Veteran homelessness is an area of special emphasis.

We stand ready to meet veterans' needs when they return to Minnesota. Many veterans return with visible combat injuries such as amputated limbs, while many more carry invisible wounds such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. We help them meet their needs by providing assistance and support in accessing their higher education, medical, and financial assistance benefits.

The division also works to identify gaps in programming and services which may exist in the veterans' services community, and addresses those shortcomings by providing innovative, veteran-focused services to Minnesota veterans, their dependents, and survivors.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

We administer the following programs to meet the needs of eligible veterans, their dependents and survivors.

- **Claims and Field Operations** staff represent veterans and their family members by acting as their advocate in matters pertaining to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits and entitlements. This division consists of the St. Paul and Fargo Claims offices, the Gold Star Families and Women's Program, Tribal Veterans Service Officers, and Veterans Outreach. (<http://mn.gov/mdva/resources/healthdisability/>)
- **Veterans Employment and Education Division** helps veterans and eligible family members navigate the complicated higher educational benefits system and promotes employment and self-sufficiency for those individuals. This division includes the Higher Education Veterans Program (Veterans' Campus Representatives), the State Approving Agency and also administers the Minnesota GI Bill and Veterans Employment Preference. (<http://mn.gov/mdva/resources/education/>)
- **State Veterans Cemeteries and Memorial Affairs** assures that Veterans and their families are honored with final resting places that have national significance and lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our nation. The division operates three Veterans' cemeteries: one in Little Falls, one in Preston, and the newly opened facility in Duluth. It also manages the Military Funeral Honors Stipend Program and the Bronze Star Marker Program. (<http://mn.gov/mdva/memorials/>)
- **State Veterans Benefits Division** provides programs and services unique to Minnesota's Veterans, leads the implementation of the goal in the State Plan to End Veteran Homelessness and supplements certain federal programs. The division manages the State Soldiers Assistance Program, Veterans homelessness initiatives, Minnesota Veteran S.O.A.R., LinkVet, Minnesota Service C.O.R.E., and the Minnesota Operation for Veterans Empowerment (M.O.V.E.). (<http://mn.gov/mdva/resources/familyassistance/>)
- **MDVA Grant Programs** provide needed funding to our partners who assist us in our goals of serving veterans.
  - **Veterans Service Organizations (VSO) Grants** are provided to Congressionally Chartered Veterans Service Organizations in Minnesota to assist veterans and their families receive all the federal, state, and local benefits they are entitled to.
  - **County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) Grants** are provided to all 87 counties to provide outreach for the reintegration of combat veterans into society, to collaborate with social service agencies, educational institutions, and other community organizations to enhance services offered to veterans, to reduce homelessness, and to enhance the operations of the county veterans service office. (<http://www.macvso.org/>)
  - **Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)**, funded through a grant from MDVA, provides assistance throughout Minnesota to veterans and their families who are homeless or in danger of homelessness. (<http://www.mac-v.org/>)
  - **Support Our Troops (SOT) Grants** are competitive grants provided to eligible foundations and other organizations approved by the Commissioner, whose purpose is supporting and improving the lives of veterans and their families. These grants are funded through the Support Our Troops License Plate Account. (<http://mn.gov/mdva/resources/federalresources/grants/>)

**Partners** – We partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Veterans Services Organizations (VSOs), County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs), the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) and other organizations in all of the ways listed above in order to provide benefits and services to Veterans. Additionally we partner with a number of state agencies to accomplish our work.

## RESULTS

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quantity	Per capita average of federal VA dollars being expended on benefits and services provided to Minnesota Veterans, their dependents and survivors.	\$7,937	\$8,445	Federal FY16 & FY17
Quantity	Number of Veterans and their dependents who have MDVA staff acting as their accredited representative to the federal VA.	51,793	54,473	7/31/16 & 7/19/18
Quantity	Number of Minnesota GI Bill participants approved for Higher Education programs or OJT/Apprenticeship programs.	1,071	1,470	FY16 & FY17
Quantity	Number of interments and inurnments at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries.	564	621	FY16 & FY17
Quantity	Number of Veterans and their dependents who were provided statewide, community-based counseling through C.O.R.E. program participation.	575	748	FY16 & FY17
Quality	Percent of C.O.R.E. program participants that were satisfied with the services received and indicated that the services met their needs	100%	100%	FY16 & FY17
Results	Number of Homeless Veterans identified in MN during HUD's annual Point in Time (PIT) Count.	644	253	Jan. 2010 & Jan. 2017

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Programs & Services legal authority comes from:

- Minn. Stat. 197 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/197>)

## Program: Veterans Healthcare

[mn.gov/mdva/](http://mn.gov/mdva/)

## AT A GLANCE

- Five State Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Luverne, Minneapolis, and Silver Bay
  - Provide 24/7 Skilled Nursing and Domiciliary Care
  - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Certification achieved at all four skilled homes
  - One of only three Adult Day Health Care Programs (Medical Model) in the country
- The 2018 bonding bill provided \$32 million in state funding for three new State Veterans Homes – Individual Federal Applications for federal matching funds will be submitted prior to April 1, 2019
- MDVA’s first advanced care dental clinic opened in the summer of 2018 at the Minneapolis home
- Approximately 1,300 employees providing care to Veterans
- Work closely with state, federal, and community partners

## PURPOSE &amp; CONTEXT

The first Veterans Home was established in 1887 in Minneapolis as the Minnesota Soldiers Home to “reward the brave and deserving.” This Soldiers Home in Minneapolis was not primarily designed as a medical facility, but as the needs of Veterans changed, so too have the Veterans Homes. In the 1960s, Minnesota started shifting its primary focus to meet the healthcare needs of Veteran residents in our homes. Today, MDVA operates five Veterans Homes located in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Minneapolis, Luverne, and Silver Bay, and one Adult Day Care program in Minneapolis.

Healthcare initiatives are reviewed annually both centrally and locally by all homes in an effort to ensure that quality care and operational excellence is achieved. The following health care initiatives were developed with staff and stakeholder input, including agency level policy and procedures to maintain consistent statewide outcomes. The MDVA healthcare program’s goal is to ensure that all are working as one agency providing the highest level of care. Calendar year 2018 includes the following initiatives:

1. Dementia Care –
  - a. **Goal:** Each facility will develop a dementia care strategy which includes identification of a dementia philosophy, integration plan of that philosophy into daily operations and resource allocation for dementia programming and educational plan.
2. Hospice/Palliative Care
  - a. **Goal:** Develop staff competencies in the areas of palliative care, advance care planning and hospice in all Veterans Homes to further enhance the clinical care provided to residents and ensure dignity at end of life.
3. Tobacco Use
  - a. **Goal:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) have a smoking safety and smoking reduction focus. The MDVA Healthcare Division will continue to support efforts for a tobacco free environment for all residents, employees, volunteers and visitors.
4. Business Office Operations
  - a. **Goal:** To maximize revenues from all available resources and develop division level healthcare policies and procedures regarding evidenced based best practices for standard senior healthcare business operations.

5. Oral Health Care

- a. **Goal:** The Healthcare division will develop an integrated oral health care strategy within all of the homes that includes education for direct care staff on daily oral care, applying for grants to provide dental care services, use of the federal VA dental benefits for those Veterans eligible to receive them, and evaluating the possibility of expansion to add advanced dental clinics at the other Minnesota Veterans Homes in greater Minnesota. Currently, veterans comprise 23 percent of the state's 65 years or older population and nearly one quarter of the state's 75 years or older population. The number of veterans over the age of 75 is expected to increase by approximately 9 percent over the next 20 years.

**SERVICES PROVIDED**

MDVA provides care that is designed and delivered according to the individual needs of the resident. MDVA homes have the goal of restoring, optimizing and/or maintaining each resident's level of function, personal autonomy, and dignity while recognizing the individual's service to the country.

The following programs and services are offered in each Veterans Home:

- Specialty care units for those diagnosed with dementia
- Rehabilitation services, including occupational, physical therapy and physical fitness
- Social services, recreational therapy, and behavioral services
- Coordination of appointments with the closest federal VA Medical Center, including transportation and clinical coordination
- Volunteer programs
- Drug and alcohol supportive services
- Vocational rehabilitation
- On-site specialty services – dental, ophthalmology, audiology, podiatry
- Primary medical care

In recent years, our homes have undergone a number of changes to improve the quality of care being provided. These changes include:

- Implementation of resident-centered care models at all of the Veterans Homes to meet the unique individualized care of Veterans
- Analysis of Domiciliary Care and program changes to best meet the needs of the Vietnam era and peacetime era Veteran
- Asset Preservation and repair and betterment funding of \$14 million to extend the useful life and maintain aging facilities at all locations
- Building 22 was completed on the Minneapolis campus in March 2018, marking the completion of a three phase construction project of new skilled nursing homes, serving 300 residents. A secure 12 bed unit is planned to open in October of 2018, this unit will care for Veterans who have had challenges residing at other facilities.
- Compliance with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) standards for the purpose of enhancing the level of care provided at the Veterans Homes and generating an opportunity to bill services to the federal government under the Medicare insurance programs.



## RESULTS

The healthcare MDVA provides to Veterans and other eligible residents residing in the Veterans Homes optimizes activities of daily living and is designed to improve quality of life. The MN Veterans Homes provide a community environment for Veterans and families that promotes respect, dignity, and mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Providing enhanced mental health and chemical dependency training and dedicated professionals, our staff can promote and support transition of domiciliary residents back to their communities. The key measures reviewed to understand if we are meeting these goals are customer satisfaction, staff turnover, and the prevalence of citations or recommendations from the Minnesota Department of Health, the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs, and CMS.

<i>Type of Measure</i>	<i>Name of Measure</i>	<i>Previous</i>	<i>Current</i>	<i>Dates</i>
Quality	Resident Satisfaction Survey. Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted at all five Veterans Homes by Pinnacle Quality Insight on a monthly basis, dating back to 2009, and comparative results are calculated quarterly and annually. The company surveys residents and families on a number of key indicators which include nursing, response to individual needs, therapy, safety, and cleanliness. The results are then compared to other Veterans Homes and nursing homes across the country. Minnesota Veterans Homes have earned "Best in Class" certificates for their scores.	4.64 (low = 1, high = 5)	4.72 (low = 1, high = 5)	2015 & 2017
Quantity	Staff turnover rates. It is important to our residents and their families that we maintain a stable, highly trained staff. While a certain amount of turnover is inevitable we strive to have a steady staffing roster.	25.2%	19.9%	2015 & 2017
Quality	The annual CMS 5 Star Staffing Report from Equip was calculated for the 2015-2016 time frame, so the Veterans Homes are compared to the national staffing standard. They continue to score at the higher end of the rating. Our goal is to maintain a 4-5 star overall staffing ratio at the Skilled Veterans Homes, and we have met those goals for the past two years.	4-5 Star	4-5 Star	2015 & 2017

In addition to resident and staff surveys, over the past several years Minnesota Veterans Homes have had several citation free federal VA surveys, surveys with very few recommendations by the Minnesota Department of Health, and good certification surveys by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

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Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from M.S. 198 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=198>)