

<http://mn.gov/mdva/>

AT A GLANCE

- Employ approximately 1,400 staff statewide
- Provide four major program areas, each with numerous veteran services
- Operates 5 State Veterans Homes
- Serve nearly 369,000 Veterans in Minnesota

PURPOSE

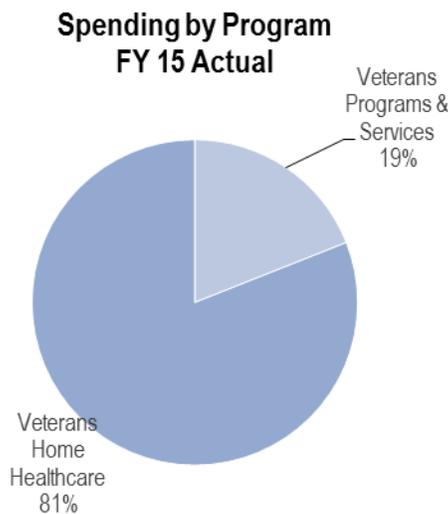
The mission of Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA) is “Dedicated to serving Minnesota Veterans and their families.” We are a “post wartime agency” and were created by the 1943 state Legislature to consolidate the services provided to service members, and since 2007, we have operated the Minnesota Veterans Homes. Today, there are approximately 369,000 veterans in Minnesota (seven percent of the state population).

Since 9/11, over 71,000 Minnesotans have been discharged from active duty and more than 45,000 have served in a combat zone. Veterans face many challenges, including matching their military skills to civilian occupations, higher unemployment rates than their civilian counterparts, and short- and long-term medical issues resulting from their military duty. In addition, both veterans and their families experience mental fatigue and injuries associated with military deployments. Finally, nearly 1/3 (28%) of the state’s population aged 75 and older are veterans, many with unique long-term care needs.

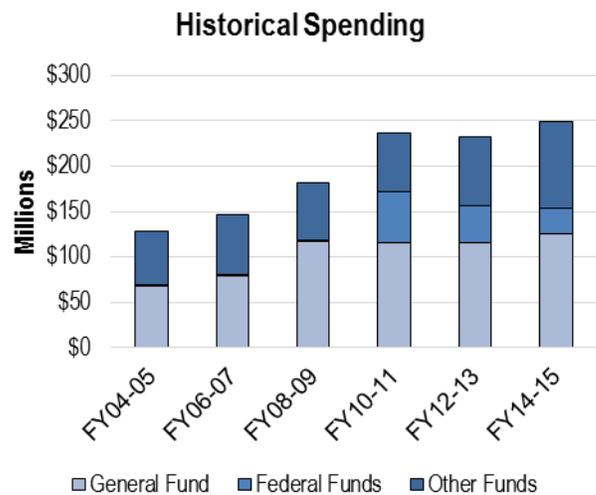
MDVA exists to fulfill the needs of these veterans and their families by providing innovative programs and services to maximize quality of life. In doing so, MDVA contributes to the statewide outcomes of:

- **All Minnesotans have optimal health**
- **Minnesotans have the education and skills needed to achieve their goals**
- **Strong and stable families and communities**

BUDGET



Source: BPAS



MDVA activities are funded approximately 50% from the general fund, 11% from federal funds and 39% from special revenue funds.

The Program & Services Division receives a majority of its funding from the General Fund. Project specific federal funding also provides significant funding for building maintenance and health care services.

The Healthcare Division is funded by the General Fund, resident maintenance fees, and VA per diem. The historical spending graph reflects the following breakdown:

- A General Fund appropriation of \$94 million for the 2014/15 biennium which was transferred to and spent out of the Special Revenue or Other Fund, (the graph above reflects these expenditures out of the General Fund in order to show its source of funding).
- An additional \$92 million from revenues received from the Federal VA Administration for veteran full and partial per diem, Medicare reimbursements for Medicare Part A, B & D, and revenue received from resident maintenance charges, which is recognized in the special revenue or "Other Funds" on the chart.
- And, \$16.5 million of Federal grant funds were received and spent primarily for the new skilled nursing buildings 19 & 21 on the Minneapolis Campus along with other smaller construction projects at the other four out-state Veterans Homes during the 2014/15 biennium.

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 and ongoing needs of veterans and their families. We do this through two divisions: Programs & Services and the Minnesota State Veterans Homes (Veterans Healthcare).

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 veterans service community to assist veterans in obtaining these benefits. A few areas of assistance are financial, educational and/or medical benefits. Additionally, there are an estimated 279 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>), so MDVA's programs also assist in identifying and developing housing plans for homeless veterans and veterans at risk of homelessness. Finally, our Programs & Services Division and partners provide resources for financial, family and mental health counseling, as well as operating two Veterans cemeteries and coordinating funeral honors benefits.

MDVA's Healthcare Division operates five Minnesota Veterans Homes located in Luverne, Fergus Falls, Silver Bay, Hastings and Minneapolis to ensure that veterans and their families have options for meeting their long-term care needs while providing high-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 such as rehabilitation, work therapy, transportation, chemical dependency, psychological, medical, primary care, spiritual and recreational services to improve the health and quality of life of its residents.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from M.S. 196 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=196>) and M.S. 197 (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=197>).

Program: Programs & Services

<http://mn.gov/mdva/>

AT A GLANCE

- 88 employees throughout the state
- Serve veterans of all eras and ages
- Work closely with other state and federal partners.

PURPOSE & CONTEXT

The Programs and Services Division (PSD) provides programs and services that are designed to assist Minnesota Veterans and their families to attain the federal and state benefits to which they are entitled.

We are experiencing an increased demand for services due to both the aging of the veteran population and the large number of veterans recently returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 9/11, over 71,000 Minnesotans have served on active duty or have been activated, of which over 45,000 have served in a combat zone. This demand for services will continue to increase over the next months and years as the Department of Defense implements an anticipated reduction in force.

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 to access their higher education, medical, and financial assistance benefits.

Ultimately, we fill voids that exist in the veterans' services community by providing 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. (no goals are stated)

- **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, which acts as the state approving agency and administers the Minnesota GI Bill. (<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 two veterans' cemeteries, one in Little Falls and the newly opened facility in Preston. 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 and supplements certain federal programs. The division manages the State Soldiers Assistance Program, LinkVet, Minnesota Service C.O.R.E., Minnesota Operation for Veterans Empowerment (MOVE) and Veterans Preference. (<http://mn.gov/mdva/resources/familyassistance/>)
- **Special Advisor on Ending Veteran's Homelessness** works directly with the MDVA, the State Director to Prevent and End Homelessness, and all key partners throughout Minnesota and leads the implementation of the goal in the State Plan to End Veteran Homelessness on a Veteran by Veteran basis. This 18-month position is a collaborative partnership with the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

- **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 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, Veterans Services Organizations, County Veterans Service Officers, the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans 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	Number of MN Veterans and their dependents receiving federal VA compensation or pensions.	96,811	107,190	4/15/14 & 6/10/16
Quantity	Number of Veterans and their dependents who have MDVA staff acting as their accredited representative to the federal VA.	41,771	51,793	7/22/14 & 7/31/16
Quantity	Number of Minnesota GI Bill participants approved for Higher Education programs or OJT/Apprenticeship programs.	1,362	1,321	FY15 & FY16
Quantity	Number of interments and inurnments at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemeteries.	418	564	FY15 & FY16
Results	Percent of C.O.R.E. program participants that were satisfied with the services received and indicated that the services met their needs.	98%	100%	Aug. 2014 & June 2015
Results	Number of Homeless Veterans identified in MN during HUD's annual Point in Time (PIT) Count.	644	279	Jan. 2010 & Jan. 2016

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from M.S. 196.01
<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=196.01>.

Program: Veterans Health Care

<http://mn.gov/mdva/>

AT A GLANCE

- Operate 5 State Veterans Homes in Minneapolis, Hastings, Luverne, Fergus Falls and Silver Bay
- Provide 24/7 Skilled Nursing and Domiciliary Care and operate an Adult Day Care
- Approximately 1,200 employees across the state
- Serve veterans of all eras and ages
- Work closely with other state, federal, and community partners

PURPOSE & CONTEXT

The first Minnesota Veterans Home was established in 1887 as the Minnesota Soldiers Home to “reward the brave and deserving.” This first Soldiers Home in Minneapolis was not primarily designed to be a medical facility, but as the needs of returning veterans have changed, so too have the Veterans Homes. In the 1960s, MDVA started shifting its focus to making the health care needs of veterans the Homes’ primary concern. Today, we operate five Veterans Homes in Fergus Falls, Hastings, Minneapolis, Luverne, and Silver Bay, and one Adult Day Care facility in Minneapolis.

Currently, veterans comprise 24 percent of the state’s 65 year old or older population and 28 percent of the state’s 75 year old or older population. Many of those aging veterans come to one of the Veterans Homes with conditions unique to veterans such as Traumatic Brain Injuries and Post Traumatic Stress.

With the number of veterans over the age of 75 expected to increase by approximately nine percent over the next 20 years, and with over 43,000 recently deployed veterans since 9/11, we strive to respond to the needs of both the current and future population of veterans in Minnesota

SERVICES PROVIDED

We provide care that is designed and delivered according to the individual needs of each resident. Our 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. This goal is achieved through facilities that provide **Skilled Nursing Care** with special care units for the treatment of Dementia and Alzheimer’s, **Domiciliary Care** (board and care) and **Adult Day Care** services. In addition, we provide the following programs or services:

- Rehabilitation services, including occupational, physical therapy and physical fitness
- Social services, recreational therapy and behavioral services
- Transportation
- Volunteer programs
- Drug and alcohol treatment
- Work therapy
- Dental and optometry care
- 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,
- a new building at the Minneapolis campus, and
- additional clinical training for the staff through a community partnership with Twin Cities Healthcare partnership (TCHP).
- Compliance with the Centers for Medicare & 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. New certification was achieved for Silver Bay Veterans Home, building 21,

which is 100 beds for the Minneapolis Veterans Home, and the Luverne Veterans Home passed their Medicare certification survey on August 18, 2016.

- The Minneapolis Adult Day was recognized with a 2016 -State Government Innovation Award for their project called Operation Sight and Sound.
- The Silver Bay Veterans Home was recognized in 2015 with a State Continuous Improvement Award for their interdisciplinary team work and the improved beneficial resident outcomes related to behaviors and reducing psychotropic medication use. This project included additional staff training on dementia care with the Gemini program and the implementation of new life enrichment coordinators.
- Establishment, in 2014, the ongoing work of a Commissioners Healthcare Task Force to provide guidance for best practices and programming for our veterans homes, which has proved to be a valuable resource to our agency leadership.

RESULTS

The health care we provide to veterans residing in the Veterans Homes optimizes their activities of daily living which leads to improved quality of life. We provide a community environment for veterans and families that promotes respect, dignity and mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. With enhanced mental health and chemical dependency training and staffing, our staff can promote and support transition of domiciliary residents back to their communities. The key measures we review 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 2014</i>	<i>Current 2015</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)	4.67 (low = 1, high = 5)	2014 & 2015
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.	19.6%	25.2%	2014 & 2015
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	2014 & 2015

In addition to resident and staff surveys, over the past two 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). In 2015, the Silver Bay Veterans Home successfully completed their CMS certification survey. In March 2016, Building 21 at the Minneapolis Veterans Home was CMS certified, and as of August 2016 the Luverne Veterans Home has completed their CMS certification survey.

Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from M.S. 198.01
(<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=198.01>)