

Table of Contents  
2016-17 Biennial Budget – Veterans Affairs, Department of

Agency Profile – Veterans Affairs, Department of .....	1
Programs & Services.....	3
Veterans Health Care.....	5

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

**AT A GLANCE**

- Employ 1,490 staff across the state
- Provide 20 programs or services
- Provide a variety of aging healthcare specialties in 5 State Veterans Homes
- Receive employee, facilities, and 87 software applications support from MN.IT

**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 at the height of World War II to consolidate the services provided to the increasing number of returning service members, and since 2007 we have operated the Minnesota Veterans Homes. Today, there are approximately 360,000 veterans in Minnesota (or seven percent of the state population).

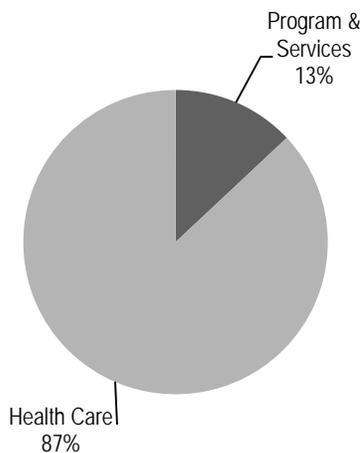
Since 9/11, over 66,000 Minnesotans have been discharged from active duty and 43,000 have served in a combat zone. Veterans face many challenges, including matching their military skills to civilian occupations, higher unemployment rates than their civilian counterparts, and short- and long-term medical issues resulting from their military duty. In addition, both veterans and their families experience mental fatigue and injuries associated with military deployments. Nearly 1/3 (28%) of the state's 75 year old plus population 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

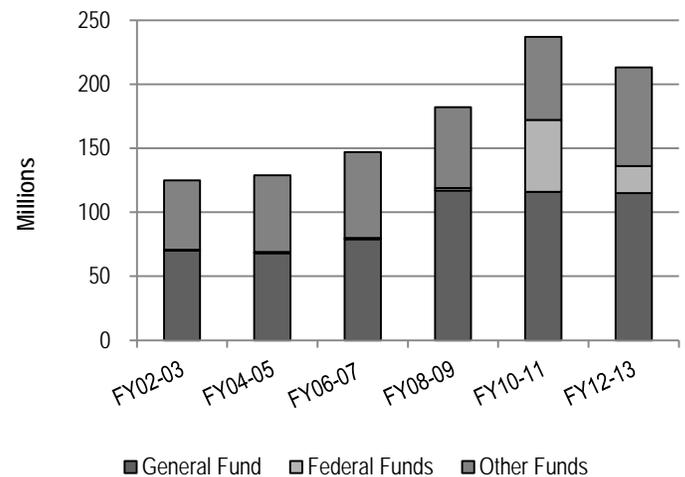
**BUDGET**

**Spending by Program  
FY 13 Actual**



Source: SWIFT

**Historical Spending**



Source: Consolidated Fund Statement

MDVA activities are funded approximately 54% from the general fund, 10% from federal funds and 36% from special revenue funds.

The Program & Services Division received a majority of its funding, \$27.6 million for the 2012/13 biennium, from the general fund. Two additional funding sources are included: an additional \$677,000 was received from federal sources for MDVA's roll in approving institutions of higher learning for the use of GI Bill benefits (SAA), and also Little Falls Cemetery construction funding in the amount of \$728,000.

The Healthcare Division is jointly funded by the general fund, federal funds, and residents. The historical spending graph reflects the following breakdown:

- A general fund appropriation of \$88.7 million for the 2012/13 biennium which was transferred to and spent out of the special revenue fund, (the graph above reflects these expenditures out of the general fund).
- An additional \$77.2 million from revenues received from the Federal VA Administration for veteran full and partial per diem, Medicare reimbursements for Medicare Part D (pharmaceuticals), and revenue received from resident maintenance charges, was expended from the special revenue fund.
- And, Federal grant funds were received and spent for the new skilled nursing building 19 on the Minneapolis Campus along with other smaller construction projects at the Fergus Falls and Silver Bay veteran homes during the 2012/13 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 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 309 veterans without safe, stable or affordable housing on any given night in Minnesota (<http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/the-state-of-homelessness-2014>). Finally, veterans experience unemployment at a higher rate than the general population so MDVA's programs also assist homeless veterans, veterans at risk of homelessness or unemployment, and it provides counseling and funeral honor benefits.

MDVA also operates a **Healthcare Division** which supports five State 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 through high-quality care. The homes offer **24-hour Skilled Nursing**, with Special Care Units, such as **Domiciliary and Adult Day Care**. The homes also offer 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.

MDVA is able to meet the information technology needs of the two divisions through services and support provided by Minnesota Information Technology (MN.IT). MN.IT meets those needs by:

- Administering the Information Technology Service Level Agreement for the departments and offices that defines partnerships, roles and responsibilities, service metrics, and budgets;
- Providing expertise, planning and development of technology systems and data architectures;
- Supplying high-level security for all departmental data, systems, and communications;
- Managing communications networks and telecommunications systems;
- Administering networks and infrastructure connecting all employees and 7 building connections; and
- Providing user support, training, and problem resolution.

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Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from M.S. 196 and M.S. 197

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=196>

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=197>

## Program: Programs &amp; Services

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

## AT A GLANCE

- 75 employees across the state
- Serve veterans of all era's and ages
- Provides four major program areas with several services within each program
- Work closely with other state and federal partners.

## PURPOSE &amp; CONTEXT

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

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 66,000 Minnesotans have served on active duty or have been activated, of which over 43,000 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 will return with visible combat injuries such as amputated limbs, while many more will carry the invisible wounds of war, such as traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. We meet their needs through providing assistance in accessing their earned state and federal benefits in the realm of higher **education benefits, medical benefits**, and in some cases **financial assistance** for veterans undergoing a temporary but very serious financial crisis.

Ultimately, we fill voids that exist in the veterans' services community through 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. We meet our stated goals through the following activities or services:

- **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** assists 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, 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 with national significance and lasting tributes that commemorate their service and sacrifice to our Nation. The division operates one veterans' cemetery in Little Falls and has another under construction in Fillmore County. 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 which supplement 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 so that it may assist Minnesota veterans and their families in receiving all federal, state and local benefits to which they are entitled, pursuant to its charter and stated mission.
  - **County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) Grants** are provided to Minnesota's 87 counties to provide outreach to each county's veterans to assist in the reintegration of combat veterans into society, to collaborate with other social service agencies, educational institutions, and other community organizations for the purposes of enhancing services offered to veterans, to reduce homelessness among veterans 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.macv.org/>)

**Partners** – We partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Services Organizations, County Veterans Service Officers, and the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans 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.	89,248	96,811	5/29/13 & 4/15/14
Quantity	Number of Veterans and their dependents who have MDVA as their accredited representative to the federal VA.	36,755	41,771	9/19/12 & 7/22/14
Quantity	Number of new individuals served in Veterans Resource Centers through the Higher Education Veterans Program.	5,505	6,211	Aug. 2013- Aug. 2014
Results	Percent of customers satisfied or extremely satisfied with burial services at Little Falls Veterans Cemetery.	100%	100%	Aug. 2013- Aug. 2014
Results	Percent of C.O.R.E. program participants that were satisfied with the services received, and the services met their needs.	91%	98%	Aug. 2013- Aug. 2014

**Performance Measures Notes:**

Burial data compares survey results from customers that responded to surveys sent out six months after a burial service in fiscal year 2013 vs. 2014.

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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 1,400 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 Dementia, Alzheimer’s, Schizophrenia, 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 and reduce costs. These changes include:

- Implementation of resident-centered care models at all of the Veterans Homes to meet the unique individualized care of Veterans (this includes retraining staff, remodeling facilities, and implementing a separate pharmacy).
- 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 and insurance programs (all of five Homes will become CMS-compliant over the next 2 years).
- Development of the capacity to bill Medicare Part D for pharmaceuticals.
- Establishment, in 2014, of a Commissioners Healthcare Task Force to provide guidance for best practices and programming of our homes which has proved to be a valuable resource to our agency leadership.

**Partners** - We partner with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide services to veterans. The VA provides construction grants that fund 65 percent of the Veterans Homes capital projects and the VA hospitals provide acute and ambulatory care to Veterans Home residents. The Veterans Homes also partner with congressionally chartered Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) which provide donations, entertainment and special events to residents. In addition, our homes partner with community organizations to develop productive relationships that benefit residents, staff and agency leadership.

## RESULTS

The health care we provide veterans residing in the Veterans Homes optimizes their activities of daily living – leading 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</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 49 “Best in Class” certificates although it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain our high marks as staff turnover rates are approximately 18 percent annually.	4.64 (low = 1, high = 5)	4.62 (low = 1, high = 5)	2013 & 2014
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.	18.4%	17.6%	2013 & 2014
Quality	Annual CMS 5 Star Staffing Report. Highly trained and seasoned staff is a major key to delivering positive results and outstanding care in the Veterans Homes. Our homes utilize and conduct a CMS 5 Star staffing report which measures the actual annual staffing patterns. The goal is to maintain a 4-5 star staffing ratio at each of the Homes and we have met those goals for the past two years.	4-5 Star	4-5 Star	2012 & 2013

In addition to resident and staff surveys, over the past two years Minnesota Veterans Homes have had several citation free surveys or surveys with very few recommendations by the Minnesota Department of Health, the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs and CMS at the Minneapolis Veterans Home.

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Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs legal authority comes from M.S. 198.01

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=198.01>