



Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

2021 Agency Overview



Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

Mission

Serving Minnesota Veterans, their dependents and survivors by connecting them with the federal and state care and benefits they have earned.

Vision

Fulfilling the needs of Minnesota Veterans and their families by providing proven and innovative programs and services to maximize quality of life.



Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

Agenda

- Leadership
- Strategic Goals
- Programs & Services Division
- Healthcare Division
- COVID-19 Response





MDVA Leadership Team



Larry Herke
Commissioner



Brad Lindsay
Deputy
Commissioner
Programs & Services



Mike McElhiney
Chief of Staff
Central Office



Douglas Hughes
Deputy Commissioner
Veterans Healthcare



MDVA Strategic Plan

Strategic Goals

- Ensure a seamless **continuum of support** that addresses the evolving needs of Veterans
- Increase Veteran **awareness and participation**
- Be exemplary stewards of **resources**
- Develop, sustain and retain the quality of our **workforce**





MDVA Programs & Services

- The Programs and Services Division assists Minnesota Veterans and their families in securing both the federal and state benefits they are entitled to.
- We administer programs to meet the needs of eligible Veterans, their dependents and survivors.





MDVA Programs & Services

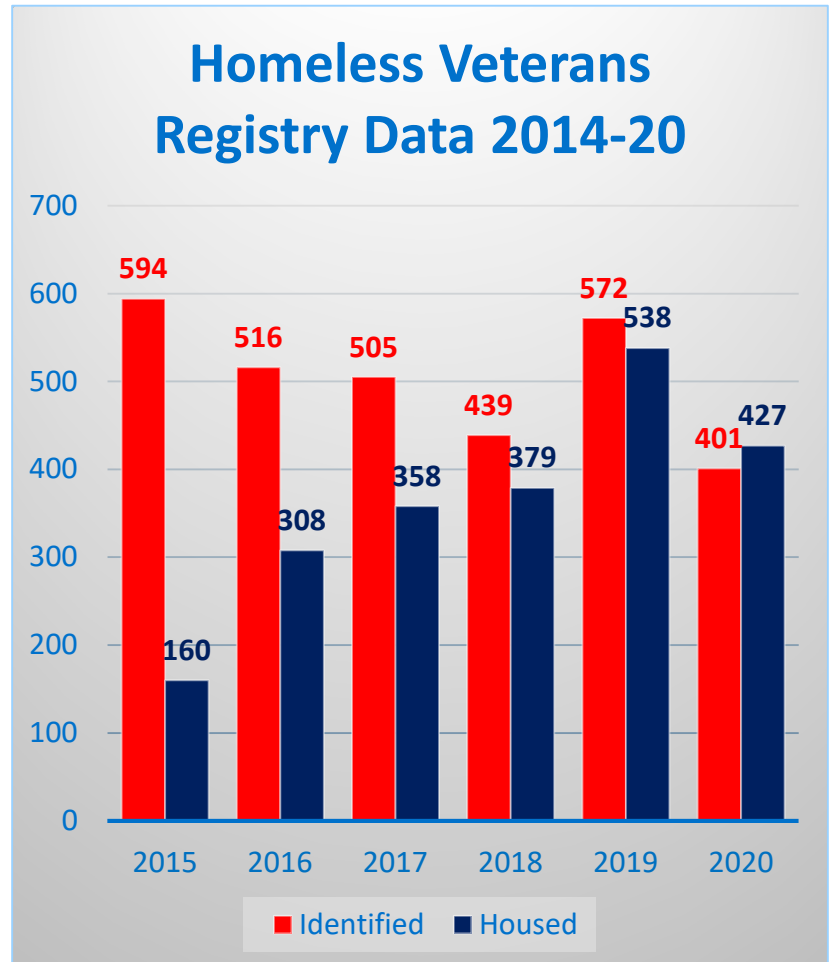
- **Federal Claims Assistance**
- **State Veterans Benefits Division**
- **Veterans Employment and Education**
- **MDVA Grant Programs**
- **State Veterans Cemeteries and Memorial Affairs**
- **Veteran Homelessness Initiative**



MDVA Programs & Services Homeless Programs



Six of the ten Continuums of Care (CoCs) in Minnesota have declared a functional end to Veteran homelessness





New State Veterans Cemetery - Update

- The Minnesota Legislature authorized the addition of three new State Veterans Cemeteries (2010)
 - Preston (opened 2016)
 - Duluth (opened 2019)
 - Redwood County (TBD)
- The National Cemetery Administration of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs notified MDVA that Redwood County been selected for a construction grant offer (2020)
- MDVA has accepted the Redwood County grant offer of \$5.99 million & initiated the formal design phase.
- Phase 1 construction is tentatively scheduled to commence in late 2021 or early 2022.





MDVA Healthcare Division

- Five State Veterans Homes located throughout Minnesota providing:
 - 24-hour Skilled Nursing Care
 - Domiciliary Care (also known as board and care)
 - Dementia Care
 - Adult Day Healthcare/Vets Club (Minneapolis only)
- Currently serving approximately 650 Veterans & eligible spouses
- Nationally recognized for high-quality long-term care
- Leading MDVA efforts on Veteran Suicide Prevention





MDVA Healthcare Division

Minneapolis



Luverne



Fergus Falls



Silver Bay



Hastings

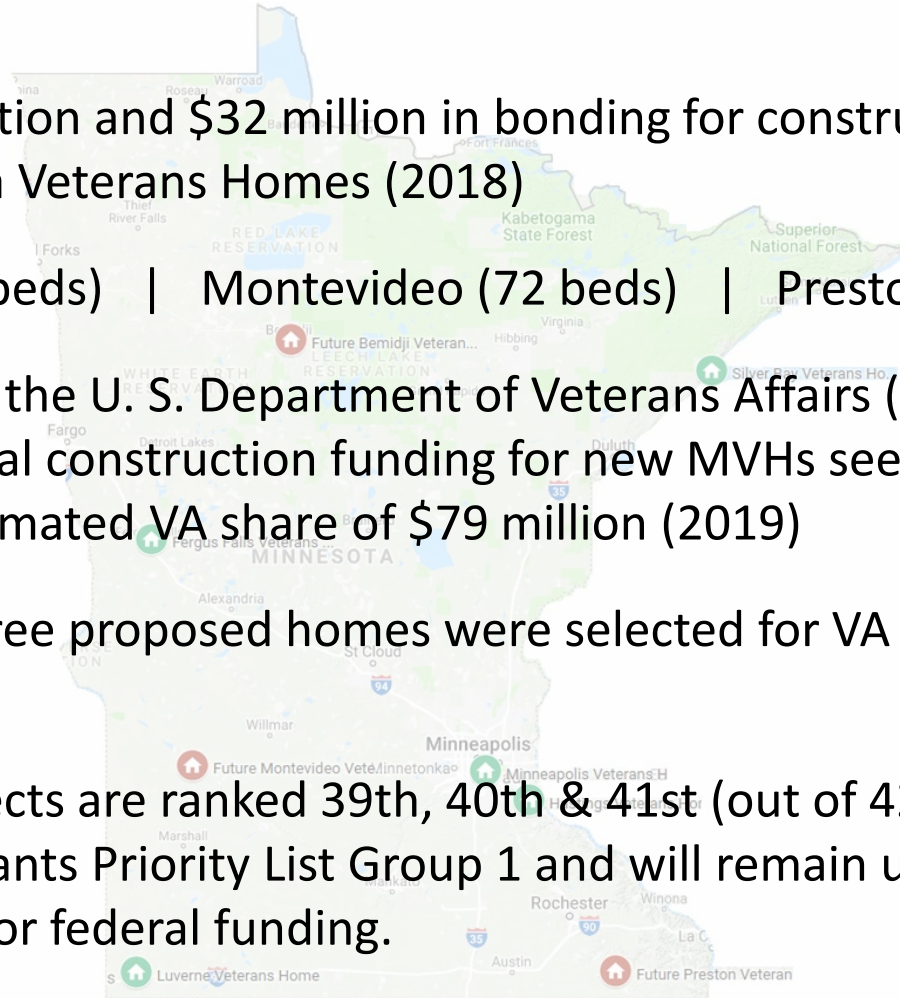


New State Veterans Homes - Update

- State authorization and \$32 million in bonding for construction of three new Minnesota Veterans Homes (2018)

Bemidji (72 beds) | Montevideo (72 beds) | Preston (54 beds)

- Applications to the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for matching federal construction funding for new MVHs seeking a cumulative estimated VA share of \$79 million (2019)
- None of the three proposed homes were selected for VA construction funds in 2020
- The three projects are ranked 39th, 40th & 41st (out of 42) projects on the FY 2020 Grants Priority List Group 1 and will remain under consideration for federal funding.





MDVA Healthcare Division Suicide Prevention

- U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Strategy: **“Suicide is preventable.”**
- Comprehensive public health model/community-based approach.
- Participating in “Governor’s Challenge” with support from USDVA.
- ***Priority is identifying and removing issues*** that cause Veterans to feel hopelessness and despair which can lead to destructive behaviors.
- **Success will be measured in outreach and educational efforts** within communities and reduction of hurdles to getting Veterans help.
- Moving towards zero Veteran deaths by suicide requires collaboration with other local, state, and federal programs who are working toward that same goal.
- There cannot be a wrong access point for Veterans for crisis intervention; success is also in tracking access points for the Veterans and their families and how we respond.

PREVENTS

The President’s Roadmap to Empower Veterans
and End a National Tragedy of Suicide



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Minnesota Veterans Homes COVID-19 Response

Beginning in March 2020, leadership at MDVA and at the Minnesota Veterans Homes developed and implemented a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic for our long-term care facilities.

Measures included:

- Mandatory screening and temperature checks for staff at all shift changes
- Contact tracing
- Limitations on non-essential visits
- Expanded PPE usage and cleaning & disinfection protocols
- Scheduled testing (depending on positivity rate)

To date, we have lost 27 residents to COVID-19 in the Minneapolis, Fergus Falls and Silver Bay Veterans Homes, as well as one direct care staff member in Minneapolis.





MDVA COVID-19 Vaccinations

COVID-19 Moderna vaccinations at Minnesota Veterans Homes began the week of December 28, 2020.

Depending on the location, the first of the two-vaccination series were administered December 29-31 or the week of January 4-9, 2021. The second of the two-vaccine series will be provided approximately 28 days following the initial dose.

The vaccine is available for both residents and staff, with an overall vaccination goal of 80% or greater (>95% residents / >70% staff).

- The vaccine is no cost to staff or residents
- If staff have had COVID-19, they may still be able to receive the vaccine; (14 days after recovery and asymptomatic)



Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

For More Information

- MDVA: www.MinnesotaVeteran.org
- LinkVet: 1-888-LinkVet (1-888-564-5838)
- Minnesota Association County Veterans Service Officers: www.macvso.org
- Minnesota Commanders' Task Force: mnctf.org