



Kimberly M. MacKay
Commandant

New Hampshire Veterans Home

139 Winter Street
Tilton, NH 03276-5415
www.nh.gov/veterans



Telephone: (603) 527-4400
Fax: (603) 286-4242

DIVISION III – HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING NEW HAMPSHIRE VETERANS HOME FISCAL YEARS 2026-2027 March 11, 2025

Members of the House Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. The New Hampshire Veterans Home submits for your approval, a proposed budget that both meets the needs of our Veterans while keeping within the Governor's budgetary targets. Our efficiency budget submission reflects just a 2% increase over FY25's Adjusted Authorized budget and reflects an additional increase of 0.3% for FY27 excluding contractual spending related to salary and benefit increases reflected in each year's collective bargaining agreements.

The New Hampshire Veterans Home was established in 1890 and is enabled under RSA:119 for the care and treatment of Civil War veterans and we are proud to continually provide high quality, professional long-term care and treatment services to our state's elderly and disabled veteran population. The Veterans Home is presently a 250-bed long-term care facility that is capped at that number by federal statute. Supporting the Home's budget is projected revenue from the State of New Hampshire General Fund (46%), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) (30%), and from individual resident's payments, what we call "Room and Board" (24%).

The FY 2026-2027 Veterans Home budget reflects the Home's goals, priorities, and needs for the upcoming biennium. This budget has been prepared and is being submitted upon the planning assumption of having a resident census of 225 veterans. The Home's current census is 135 with 33 active applications and 6 applicants that are approved but waiting in the candidate pool. Our current census remains low due to low staffing, particularly among our clinical staff. With the support of the Governor and the people's Executive Council, we have steadily increased our census to a level that is currently proportional to our clinical staff shortfall. Most noteworthy, is our RN and LNA shortage which stands at 44% and 37%, respectively. With our current vacancies, we can provide an excellent level of service for up to 150 Veterans.

Overall, my strategic priorities are to continue to maintain the safest possible facility while meeting all VA regulatory requirements. We will also attempt to further grow the census while simultaneously supporting (and retaining) our employees.

As I mentioned, qualified staffing, particularly in nursing, continues to be a challenge in terms of recruitment and retention in order to meet the increased resident census and care needs. Vacancies remain in these direct care positions, and we will continue to fill them when possible. I have chosen

not to unfund any clinical positions because my top priority is to grow our census should our staffing situation improve.

We have continually tackled our staff shortages by continuing our enhanced recruitment efforts to increase staff by attending job fairs, posting on college platforms (Like Handshake) and in local newspapers, and adding the ability to earn continuous education for credits for licensed staff; in-house Licensed Nurse Assistants (LNA) and Licensed Medical Nurse Assistants (LMNA) certification programs, and expanded light duty return to work program to keep employees engaged during recovery.

VA Regulations mandate that qualified nursing staff is available daily to meet needs for nursing care in a manner and in an environment which promotes each resident's physical, mental and psychological well-being, thus enhancing their quality of care and quality of life. Additional challenges with women's health care, bariatric care, hospice care, dementia with behavior disturbances, are among the needs our newer admitted veterans, and their families face. We are also leaning forward in preparing our facility for the next generation of veterans, the post 9/11 generation, who will begin to replace our vanishing WW2 population. Post 9/11 veterans will bring further needs, for example medical issues related to burn pits, the effects of which the VA has formally recognized under the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics otherwise known as the PACT Act legislation.

I am so proud to be the Commandant of the New Hampshire Veterans Home. We have maintained an outstanding tradition of providing the highest quality care in a cost-effective manner serving the disabled and elderly veteran population in New Hampshire. With the continuing support of the Governor, her Executive Council, and this Committee, the Veterans Home will be able to continue in this tradition.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kimberly M MacKay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kimberly M. MacKay, Commandant