

News from Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Rep. Kind Makes it Easier for VA to Hire and Retain Health Care Professionals

La Crosse, WI – Today, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind voted in support of a bipartisan bill that would streamline and improve the process for VA Medical Centers, like Tomah, to hire and retain needed health care professionals. This comes amid staffing shortages at the Tomah VA Medical Center and VA Medical Centers across Wisconsin and Minnesota.

“In my many conversations with Wisconsin veterans and visits to the Tomah VA, one of the most common complaints is the shortage of health care professionals, including nurses, psychiatrists, and dermatologists. By adding incentives for qualified health care professionals to seek employment at the VA and streamlining the process we ensure that Wisconsin veterans are receiving the care they have earned and deserve,” said Rep. Kind.

The VA has struggled for years with filling vacant positions in the VA health care and benefits systems. According to reports, there are currently more than 40,000 open health care positions with the VA. Among other provisions, the legislation Congressman Kind supported today (HR 1367) would authorize the VA to create a single database where all positions considered critical to the VA and/or are difficult to fill are listed and gives the VA the ability to consider them for similar, vacant positions in addition to the one in which they apply. It also expands veterans preference in the federal hiring processes to include retired members of the armed forces, national guardsmen, and reservists who have served on active duty for more than 180 cumulative days.

Rep. Kind has worked to solve the staffing shortages at the VA. Earlier this year he sponsored a bill to reverse President Trump’s Executive Order that instituted a hiring freeze at the Department of Veterans Affairs. Also, he has introduced a bill to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), which would help them recruit health professionals.