



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

August 30, 2016

The Honorable Robert A. McDonald
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary McDonald,

We are writing to request that the Department of Veterans Affairs conduct a for cause survey of the Wisconsin State Veterans Home at King. As the attached article from the *Capital Times* documents, there have been numerous allegations by veterans, family members and staff of incidents, complaints, deficiencies and events that jeopardize the health and safety of residents at King. These include incidents of neglect, overmedication and erroneous prescription of medication, antiquated equipment and facilities, exposure to toxins, lack of control programs for certain infections, and consistent understaffing that contributes to poor patient care. As the article indicates, some family members of veterans housed at King believe that poor conditions there were contributing factors in the deaths of their loved ones.

That this situation persists despite the fact that the home is well funded, and that the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs has diverted revenue from the homes to pay for administrative costs and other budgetary uses, suggests that there is a pattern of mismanagement of the veterans' home at King that is endangering the health and safety of its residents. We urge the Veterans Administration to conduct an immediate for cause survey, so that independent investigators can ascertain the extent and cause of the problems at King.

Wisconsin's military veterans have sacrificed much to defend our liberty, and the care we provide at the state veterans' homes is part of our solemn commitment to them. They deserve the very best care we can provide, and the allegations that have been made suggest that the WDVA has been seriously deficient in meeting that commitment. We urge the VA to investigate conditions at King so that Wisconsin can return to providing our veterans and their families with the care they deserve.

We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

State Senator Jennifer Shilling

State Senator Dave Hansen

State Senator Janis Ringhand

State Senator Julie Lassa

State Senator Jon Erpenbach