



James S. Hartsell
Executive Director

State of Florida
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Office of the Executive Director

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LONG RANGE PROGRAM PLAN

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs
Largo, Florida
September 15, 2023

Chris Spencer, Director
Office of Policy and Budget
Executive Office of the Governor
1702 Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

J. Eric Pridgeon, Staff Director
House Appropriations Committee
221 Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Tim Sadberry, Staff Director
Senate Committee on Appropriations
201 Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Directors:

Pursuant to Chapter 216, Florida Statutes, our Long Range Program Plan (LRPP) for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is submitted in the format prescribed in the budget instructions. The information provided electronically and contained herein is a true and accurate presentation of our mission, goals, objectives, and measures for the Fiscal Year 2024-25 through Fiscal Year 2028-29. The internet website address that provides the link to the LRPP located on the Florida Fiscal Portal is <http://floridavets.org/about-us/long-range-program-plan/>. This submission has been approved by James S. Hartsell, Executive Director.

Sincerely,

James S. Hartsell
Major General, U.S. Marine Corps (Retired)
Executive Director

"Honoring those who served U.S."

Long Range Program Plan

Fiscal Years 2024-25 through 2028-29



The premier point of entry for Florida veterans to access earned services, benefits and support.

FDVA



James S. Hartsell, Major General, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired
Executive Director

Agency Mission and Goals

MISSION

To advocate with purpose and passion for Florida Veterans and link them to superior services, benefits, and support.

VISION

FDVA is the premier point of entry for Florida Veterans to access earned services, benefits, and support.

AGENCY GOALS

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA or department) has identified three goals from the Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat Analysis. Goals one and two concentrate on external customer service improvement and enhancement. Goal one establishes that services and activities of the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance are directly focused on Florida Veterans, their families, and survivors. Goal two ensures that Florida Veterans have the availability of much needed long-term health care services by establishing, maintaining, and as needed, expanding the Division of Long-Term Care. Goal three directly supports FDVA's mission to advocate for and effectively meet its statutory responsibility to all Florida Veterans. Objectives and associated outcomes are defined to measure and evaluate the progress towards each goal and are directly correlated to the Legislature-approved Agency Performance Measures.

- Goal One:** Provide information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families, and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.
(Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance)
- Goal Two:** Provide quality long-term health care services to eligible Florida Veterans.
(Division of State Veterans' Homes)
- Goal Three:** Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving veterans.
(Executive Direction and Support Services)

*“Always do more than is required of you.”
~ Gen. George S. Patton Jr. ~*

Agency Objectives

- ❖ To increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation.
- ❖ To increase value of cost avoidance due to veterans' issue resolutions.
- ❖ To maintain a minimum 90% occupancy rate at State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer.
- ❖ To operate FDVA State Veterans' Homes in compliance with Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) rules and regulations.
- ❖ To provide quality, cost effective and efficient executive leadership and administrative support services.

Agency Service Outcomes and Performance Projections Tables

DIVISION OF VETERANS' BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE

GOAL ONE: Provide information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families, and survivors, and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Objective 1A: To increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation.

Outcome: Increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation by two percent per year.

Baseline/Year	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
\$70,747,000 2005-2006	\$103,605,812	\$105,677,928	\$107,791,487	\$109,947,316	\$112,146,262

Objective 1B: To increase value of cost avoidance due to Veterans' issue resolutions.

Outcome: Increase value of cost avoidance due to Veterans' issue resolutions by two percent per year.

Baseline/Year	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
\$17,417,140 2006-2007	\$24,895,874	\$25,393,791	\$25,901,667	\$26,419,701	\$26,948,095

Agency Service Outcomes and Performance Projections Tables

DIVISION OF STATE VETERANS' HOMES

GOAL TWO: Provide quality long-term health care services to eligible Florida Veterans.

Objective 2A: To maintain a minimum occupancy rate at State Veterans' Homes in operation two years or longer.

Outcome: Percentage occupancy for homes in operation two years or longer.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
90% 1999-2000	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Objective 2B: To operate FDVA State Veterans' Homes in compliance with Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) rules and regulations.

Outcome: Percentage of State Veterans' Homes in substantial compliance with AHCA, CMS and USDVA rules and regulations.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
100% 2002-2003	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Agency Service Outcomes and Performance Projections Tables

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

GOAL THREE: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

Objective 3A: To provide quality, cost effective and efficient executive leadership and administrative support services.

Outcome: Maintain administrative costs as a percentage of total agency costs under 6.8 percent.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
6.8% 2005-2006	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%

Outcome: Maintain administrative and support positions as a percentage of total agency positions under 4.4 percent.

Baseline/ Year	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	FY 2028-29
4.4% 2005-2006	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%

FDVA affirms its goals as a Veterans' advocate and provider of long-term health care services to eligible Florida Veterans. FDVA's focus is to be an advocate and facilitator for progress on Florida Veterans' issues consistent with Governor Ron DeSantis' top priorities. Listed below are those priorities and the FDVA goals associated with each.

GOVERNOR'S PRIORITIES

1. Restore and Protect Florida's Environment

- Continue major investments to improve water quality, quantity, and supply.
- Prioritize Everglades' restoration and the completion of critical Everglades' restoration projects.
- Prevent fracking and offshore oil drilling to protect Florida's environment.
- Promote resiliency initiatives that harden Florida's infrastructure and protect our communities.
- ❖ Goal One: The Homes Program Division will continue to operate and upgrade nursing facilities to harden against inclement weather situations.

2. Improve Florida's Education System

- Increase access to and expand options for quality educational choices, public and private, for Florida families.
- ❖ Goal One: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will provide information and advocacy to Florida veterans, their families and survivors and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

The Bureau of State Approving Agency will review, audit, evaluate, approve, and oversee schools and training facilities to ensure the quality standards of education programs and training under established state and federal criteria are met. As of June 2023, more than 54,564 Floridians currently use GI Bill benefits to further their secondary education. This number includes both Veterans and eligible family members.

- Maintain the Florida higher education system's status as number one in the nation while increasing accountability for institutions.
- ❖ Goal One: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will provide information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families and survivors and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

The Bureau of State Approving Agency will review, audit, evaluate, approve, and oversee schools and training facilities to ensure that education programs and training meet the established state and federal standards.

- Provide quality career and technical education options for Florida's students and workforce.

- ❖ Goal One: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will provide information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families and survivors and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Under the GI Bill, the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance advocates for the Veterans and their families to garner earned educational benefits on both state and federal levels.

State: FDVA will advocate within the state legislature to provide additional assistance to our Veterans seeking vocational rehabilitation and employment assistance in Florida.

Federal: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will advocate with purpose and passion for Florida Veterans and link them with federal educational benefits and financial support available to them through the GI Bill.

- ❖ Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

FDVA supports a direct-support Veteran organization *Veterans Florida* (Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.) with the Veterans Employment and Training Program.

Veterans Florida serves as the state's principal assistance organization under the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge program; prescribes duties of a corporation to facilitate administration of the SkillBridge program.

FDVA Procurement/Purchasing Office expressly follows state guidelines in the initiation and execution of contracts for products and services.

3. Economic Development and Job Creation

- Focus on diversifying Florida's job market, promoting manufacturing growth and strengthening our supply chain.
- ❖ Goal One: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will provide information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families and survivors and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

Florida is home to approximately 1.5 million Veterans. Florida is the most Veteran-friendly state in the nation. The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs is the premier point of entry for Florida Veterans to access earned services, benefits, and support.

- ❖ Goal Two: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

FDVA supports a direct-support Veterans' organization *Veterans Florida* (Florida Is For Veterans, Inc.) with the Veterans Employment and Training Program.

Veterans Florida serves as the state's principal assistance organization under the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge program; prescribes duties of a corporation to facilitate administration of the SkillBridge program.

FDVA's Administration effectively manages Veteran Residents Trust Accounts to

Linkage to Governor's Priorities

ensure their assets are safeguarded and disbursed fairly.

- Maintain Florida's status as a low-tax state and continue to find opportunities to reduce taxes and fees.

FDVA supports the Governor's Initiatives on Lawyers Assisting Warriors (GI LAW) program and the Bay Area Legal Service. The GI Law leverages Florida's leading law firms' talent to provide pro bono (no charge) services to military members.

FDVA advocated for the successful passage of Amendment Six, *Homestead Property Tax Discount for Spouses of Deceased Veterans*.

FDVA supports the Governor's Salute Our Soldiers (SOS) Housing Loan Program for Florida's Veterans and service members. Florida Housing administers the program to assist over 1,000 Veterans and active-duty military members with down payments, closing cost assistance, low-interest rate first mortgages and down payment and closing cost forgiveness options.

- Reduce existing regulations and stop any new regulations that do not serve the public health, safety, and welfare.
- Prioritize infrastructure development to meaningful projects that provide regional and statewide impact, primarily focused on safety, improved mobility, and reduced traffic congestion for Floridians.
- ❖ Goal One: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance will provide information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families and survivors and assist them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.
- ❖ Goal Two: The Division of State Veterans' Homes will provide comprehensive, high-quality health care to eligible Veterans in need of long-term skilled or assisted living care.

FDVA will provide a safe and secure environment in our State Veterans' Homes for our residents, staff, and visitors.

FDVA will maintain high-quality continuity of care for residents in our State Veterans' Homes in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

FDVA has two newly opened State Veterans' Nursing Homes to meet eligible veterans' needs. The number of skilled nursing beds currently available with the Division of State Veterans' Homes is 1,102. However, according to the VA's Veteran Population Projection Model 2018, the veteran population over 65 years and older in Florida is estimated to be 740,557 for FY 2022 (Federal Fiscal Year).

- ❖ Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

Forward March brings together our state agencies, Veterans' service organizations, private partners, and local community providers to combined energy and resources to ensure Florida provides the very best services and support for our veterans and their families. The primary goal is to close the identified gaps in services.

4. Health Care

- Focus resources on continuing to combat the opioid crisis and substance abuse in general and expand access to mental health services.
- ❖ Goal One: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance provides information and advocacy to Florida Veterans, their families and survivors and assists them in obtaining all federal and state benefits due to them.

The Bureau of Claims Services will ensure Veterans receive care and compensation for their service-connected disabilities through our Veterans' Claim Examiners. As the number of Veterans needing assistance grows, FDVA looks to support their needs by expanding our Veterans' Claims Services.

FDVA addresses Veteran suicide prevention by finding ways to fund Veterans' mental health services for Veterans and their families through alternative treatment options.

FDVA established the Veterans' Care Coordinator Program, which provides peer-to-peer crisis counseling, behavioral health care referrals and partner with the Florida 2-1-1 Network to provide services for veterans and their families.

FDVA spearheads the Governor's Challenge initiative and supports the Governor's Challenge website. Governor's Challenge supports efforts to use evidence-based practices to prevent and reduce the suicide of our service members, Veterans, and their families. FDVA encourages all interested stakeholders to increase their statewide suicide prevention efforts to reduce veteran suicide rates in the community.

- ❖ Goal Three: Executive Direction and Support Services provides effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

FDVA will seek to integrate, train, and expand the work of Veterans' Service Organizations.

Forward March brings together our state agencies, Veterans' service organizations, private partners, and local community providers to combined energy and resources to ensure Florida provides the very best services and support for our Veterans and their families.

FDVA will seek to support the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) Housing Assistance pilot program. The program provides additional behavioral health services and supportive housing assistance services to homeless adults with serious mental illness and substance use disorders.

- Promote innovation in health care that reduces the cost of medical procedures and services and increases access to quality care for Floridians.
- ❖ Goal Two: The Division of State Veterans' Homes will seek to provide comprehensive, high-quality health care to eligible Veterans in need of long-term skilled or assisted living care.
- ❖ Goal Three: The Executive Direction and Support Services will provide effective

and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

Forward March brings together our state agencies, Veterans' service organizations, private partners, and local community providers to combined energy and resources to ensure Florida provides the very best services and support for our Veterans and their families. The primary goal is to close the identified gaps in services.

- Reduce the cost of prescription drugs through state and federal reform.
- Promote a Florida focused approach to major issues in health care, including protecting the freedom of speech of physicians and combatting harmful medical practices against our children.

5. Public Safety

- Continue to uphold immigration law to protect our borders and communities and remove illegal aliens from the state.
- Support local and state law enforcement's ability to investigate and prevent criminal activity.
- Develop and implement comprehensive threat assessment strategies to identify and prevent threats to the public.
- ❖ Goal Two: The Division of State Veterans' Homes will seek to provide comprehensive, high-quality health care to eligible Veterans in need of long-term skilled or assisted living care.

FDVA will maintain high-quality continuity of care for residents in our State Veterans' Homes in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

FDVA will provide a safe and secure environment in our State Veterans' Homes for our residents, staff, and visitors.

- Continue efforts to enhance safety in our schools.
FDVA will employ falls prevention strategies and training to reduce risks to elderly Veterans and reduce insurance liability accordingly.

6. Public Integrity

- Protect taxpayer resources by ensuring the faithful expenditure of public funds and return funds to taxpayers through tax relief.
- ❖ Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.
- Promote greater transparency at all levels of government and promote the highest standard of ethics for state and local officials.
- ❖ Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.
- Hold public officials and government employees accountable for failure to serve the public interest at all times.

Linkage to Governor's Priorities

- ❖ Goal Three: Provide effective and responsive management to support divisions and programs serving Veterans.

Veterans' Preference Act of 1944, provisions of Title 5, U.S. Code "The state and all political subdivisions of the state shall give preference in employment, promotions after being deployed and retention." The FDVA Office of Inspector General coordinates the Veterans' Preference for Florida's Veterans' Section 295.05 (7) F.S. Veterans' Preference in Hiring and Retention, and Section 295.11 F.S. Investigation; administrative hearing for not employing the preferred applicant.

AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The mission of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA or 'the department') is to advocate with purpose and passion for Florida Veterans and link them to superior services, benefits, and support. FDVA assists Florida Veterans, their families, and survivors to improve their health and economic well-being through quality benefit information, advocacy, education, and long-term health care.

FDVA is the premier point of entry for Florida Veterans to access earned services, benefits, and support. In 1988, Florida citizens endorsed a constitutional amendment to create the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs as a separate agency charged with providing advocacy and representation for Florida's Veterans and to intercede on their behalf with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The department is organized into three divisions and six program offices to address the support system for the department operations. FDVA has two program divisions that provide direct services to Veterans and their families: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance (B&A) and the Division of State Veterans' Homes (SVH). The Division of Administration and other six programs are associated with the significant leadership and support of the FDVA's Executive Direction and Support Services (EDSS). Additionally, the department provides oversight and administrative support to one direct-support organization, "The Florida Veterans Foundation."

Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

The division's primary responsibility is to assist all former and present members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their dependents in an effort to obtain health care treatment from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), securing their financial benefits and other benefits or privileges that persons earn under any federal or state law or regulation by reason of their service in the military. All services provided by the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance are without charge to the claimant (Chapter 292, Florida Statutes). The division also acts as the State Approving Agency for veterans' education and training (in accordance with 38 U.S. Code 1771 - Limitations) through an annual contract between the federal and state government (Chapter 295, Florida Statutes).

The Division operations are comprised of three bureaus.

Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services provides counseling and assistance to Veterans, their dependents, and survivors, with the preparation, submission, and prosecution of claims and appeals for federal and state benefits as well as applications to correct military records. The bureau also supports the VA's initiatives of Homeless Veterans Outreach, Women Veterans' Integration and mental health services for Veterans and their families. The bureau is also mandated by statute to train and certify County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO).

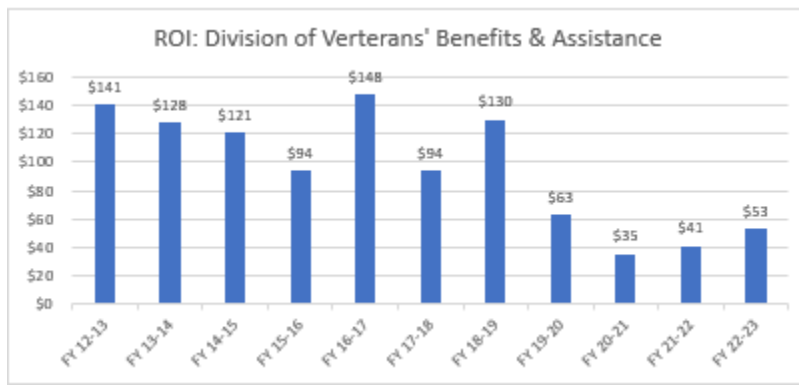
Bureau of Veterans' Field Services provides benefits counseling services in 33 of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities in Florida, four Veterans

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Affairs VET Centers, three military bases and nine State Veterans' Homes. The bureau also provides outreach activities for FDVA throughout the state. The bureau's primary responsibility is to work directly with the decision resources in the VA Regional Office to expedite claims and to influence, through proactive advocacy with the most positive outcomes.

Bureau of State Approving Agency (SAA) duties fulfill the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) contract requirements for monitoring veteran education programs' quality and integrity and enforcing approval-related laws of Title 38, U.S. Code. The bureau works with school and training organization officials to approve school and OJT/Apprenticeship programs and with License and Certification Exam coordinators for participation in GI Bill® VA Education Benefit programs.

The Outcome of Current Operations and Success of Fiscal Implications at the Division of Veterans' Benefits & Assistance.



The last 10 years average Return on Investment (ROI) is \$100 for every state dollar spent within the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance.

Improvements or Changes at the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person services were affected during the VA federal building shutdown. As a result, the division shifted the operations to telework. In addition, the division developed a Veterans' Benefits and Assistance statewide phone number and email address to provide continuing assistance to Veterans and their families during the pandemic. Temporally, the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) hearings were suspended.

Strategic Planning in Process

The department is attempting to streamline the following consequences at the Veterans' Benefits and Assistance that are obstacles to operational efficiency.

The department has experienced a turnover rate of 16 percent over the past four years with its Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCE), almost double the current average turnover rate in the state. Often, experienced, and trained Veterans' advocates are leaving for the same job with higher-paying positions at the Department of Defense, County Veteran Service Offices, Congressional Offices, and the U.S. Department of Veterans

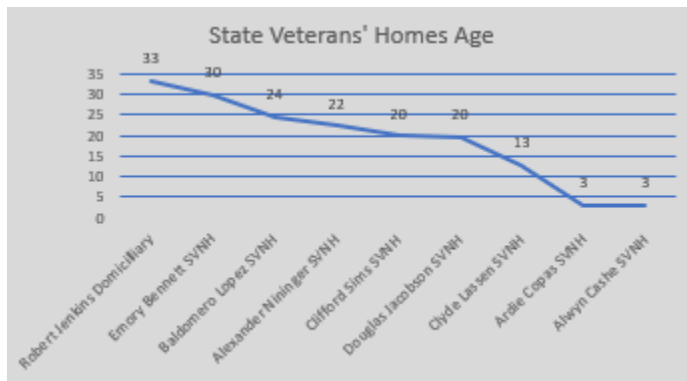
Affairs.

The department continues to provide Florida Veterans with more timely assistance, reduce the backlog of cases and increase federal funds infusion into the State of Florida. However, the department is operating overcapacity of workload, especially when providing support to Veterans for the submission of claims, representation at hearings, debt relief, and community outreach and providing additional support to the new Veterans' program initiatives. In addition, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs constantly changes policies, procedures, techniques, and programs that impact the Veterans Claims Examiners' and County Veterans Service Officers' procedure developments and services.

Division of State Veterans' Homes

In 1990, FDVA expanded the services provided to Florida Veterans by opening the Robert H. Jenkins Jr. State Veterans' Domiciliary Home in Lake City, a 150-bed Assisted Living Facility. The home assists eligible veterans with activities of daily living who are unable to live independently but do not require the services of skilled level nursing services. In addition, from 1993 through 2022, eight 120-bed Skilled Nursing Homes were built and opened in Daytona Beach, Land O' Lakes, Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, St. Augustine, Orlando (112 beds) and Port St. Lucie. The facilities provide comprehensive, high-quality, skilled nursing care on a cost-effective basis to eligible veterans (Chapter 296, Florida Statutes).

Outcome of Current Operations and Success of Fiscal Implications at the State Veterans' Homes



The Homes operate with 1,338 positions: about 27 percent of operational and support staff and 73 percent of direct care staff as of FY 2022-23. The direct care staff includes Registered Nurses (RN), Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN), and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA). Per federal and state requirements, the minimum direct care staffing ratio is 3.6 per resident/per day. Therefore, to maintain the quality of care of the

Veterans' residents and comply with federal and state statutory, the department utilizes additional staffing support from temporary staffing services through a contracted direct care service provider.

The department utilizes other services from contracted providers, including housekeeping, medical therapy, pharmacy, dietary, and software services. The department implemented data operating and electronic health records management system for protected health information of residents at the State Veterans' Homes. In addition, the department has contracted with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to

provide dining service at the Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home.

The department provides routine maintenance, repair, replacement and emergency repairs for each of the eight State Veterans' Nursing Homes and State Veterans' Domiciliary Home. The facility maintenance program implemented by the department is designed to extend the service life of the State Veterans' Homes while maintaining an appropriate and safe environment for the Veteran residents. Also, the department maintains and replaces medical and non-medical equipment and durable healthcare furniture that has reached or exceeded its useful life at all nine State Veterans' Homes.

Improvements or Changes at the Division of State Veterans' Homes

State Veterans' Homes Construction Projects

The department has completed construction projects for two new State Veterans' Nursing Homes. The construction of the new 120-bed Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home was approved by the Governor and Cabinet with 35 percent of the funding provided by the Florida Legislature and 65 percent of construction costs that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs matches as a federal cost-share grant.

- ❖ **Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie:** The 120-bed skilled nursing home with a 60-bed dementia unit received their certificate of occupancy in March 2021. It was licensed by the Agency for Health Care Administration in June 2022 and accepted its first resident on July 5, 2022. It was approved for Medicare/Medicaid, and VA recognition in December 2022.
- ❖ **Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando:** The former VA Community Living Center is a 112-bed skilled nursing home with a 32-bed dementia unit. It was built in 1998 by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and donated to the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs through the State of Florida in 2016. It was licensed by the Agency for Health Care Administration in June 2022 and accepted its first resident on July 28, 2022.

Natural Disaster Consequences

The department implements strategic changes as needed for operational improvement. In the past few years, during **natural disaster consequences and the**, the following emergency improvements and repairs were made at the State Veterans' Homes with the assistance of federal cost-share (federally funded) of 65 percent and a state cost-share of 35 percent.

- The department addressed the disaster emergency repairs at the Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home for losses associated with Hurricane Ian from September 2022.

Strategic Planning in Process

The department is attempting to streamline the following consequences at the State Veterans' Homes that are obstacles to operational efficiency.

Nurses Staffing

The licensed direct care staff ensures care plan interventions are implemented and maintained giving the appropriate care with continuous monitoring of each resident. In addition, each home employs a Licensed Clinical Social Worker that assists residents who struggle with mental health issues. Examples of these conditions include Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD) and Dementia.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Veterans' Homes had maintained an annual average occupancy of 95 percent and above. However, the number of direct care positions at each facility was initially budgeted based upon a 90 percent occupancy rate requiring use of overtime and contracted agency staff to meet the healthcare needs of our veteran residents. The direct care staffing for the division has not been updated with the increasing occupancy of the facilities.

During FY 2022-23, the overall employee turnover rate has stabilized at the State Veterans' Homes, especially with the direct care staff. However, the department struggles to fill vacancies for direct care positions as we compete against the private sector nursing paying a higher starting salary.

Department's Revenue

The census continues to rise to a level that allows the Homes to generate revenue above expenses. We will continue efforts to fill the Homes and maximize revenue.

Executive Direction and Support Services (EDSS)

The Executive Direction and Support Services administers the department's programs and initiatives and executes strategic plans for carrying out its mission of serving Florida 1.45 million veterans and their families. FDVA Executive Direction and Support Services' function encompasses the following divisions, bureaus, and offices:

Division of Administration provides administrative support to the department's day-to-day functions including Bureau of Human Resource (HR), Fiscal Bureau, Purchasing Bureau, and Billing Bureau.

The **Bureau of Human Resources (HR)** supports veterans, FDVA and its employees by administering an effective and efficient human resource program with a goal to attract, develop, retain, and reward a high-performance workforce. HR provides a variety of services and performs a variety of functions in its role as the administrator of human resources for FDVA.

Staff Development and Training Management Branch. FDVA just received approval to form a Staff Development and Training Management Branch within the Executive Direction and Support Services Division. The Staff Development and Training Management Bureau is responsible for effectively and efficiently creating and executing realistic training goals, creating, and updating training, automating existing and new training, and training and maintaining a high performing workforce for 1,500 department employees who currently do not have any centralized, training management personnel.

Information Technology (IT) provides secured IT infrastructure and reliable services to the department including hardware and software installations, upgrades, maintenance,

Trends and Conditions Statements

telephony, network management, industry standards compliance, threat and risk mitigation, data management and retrieval, and system development.

Office of General Counsel (GC) provides legal representation and counselling to the department and its employees. In addition, the office supports all FDVA divisions with legal services, including legislation drafting, public records requests, contract reviews, litigation defense support, and provision of legal assistance resources to both Florida veterans and active-duty military personnel stationed in Florida, among other services.

Office of Inspector General (IG) is the central point for audits and investigations in order to promote economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of the FDVA mission; and detect, deter, and prevent fraud, waste, and abuse within FDVA's programs and operations.

Office of Communications provides oversight and direction of the department's public affairs program of community outreach, media relations, social media engagement, branding and employee communications linking Veterans and their families to earned services, benefits, and support. In addition, the Office of Communications provides emergency coordination services to the department in liaison with the Executive Office of the Governor and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

FDVA Office of Legislative and Cabinet Affairs coordinates the department's legislative agenda and develops legislative policies and initiatives. The office also tracks and assesses the impact of legislation on the department and coordinates support in solving constituent issues for legislative and government offices across Florida.

Office of Veterans' Information Research and Outreach serves as the official veteran's data collection and data reporting body for the department. The office supports the department with federal and state veteran statistic data and maintains data standards in a secure and transparent reporting environment. The office also provides liaison service to veterans' organizations with Veteran data and outreach.

The Outcome of Current Operations and Success of Fiscal Implications

In the last few years, the executive directions promoted the following initiative to fulfill the department's vision; *Florida is the nation's most veteran-friendly state*. The FDVA is the premier point of entry for veterans to access earned services, benefits, and support.

The Florida Governor's Challenge unveiled an initiative to use evidence-based practices to prevent suicide among our service members, veterans, and their families.

K9s For Warriors Program provides service dogs to veterans who are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at no cost to veterans to help them to restore their physical and emotional independence.

University of South Florida Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans is an alternative treatment therapies research project to help veterans suffering from PTSD.

Five Star Veterans Homeless Housing and Integration provides a residential environment to help Veterans get back on their feet.

Trends and Conditions Statements

Florida Veterans Legal Helpline through helpline *Bay Area Legal Services* attorneys provide compassionate and effective legal assistance to Veterans in the State of Florida.

Statewide Department of Defense (DoD) SkillBridge Program allows servicemembers to gain workforce training at civilian employers while on active duty as they are transitioning out of the military. *Veterans Florida* (Florida is for Veterans, Inc.) is a designated organization to administer the program in the State of Florida.

Governor's Initiative on Lawyers Assisting Warriors (GI LAW) Program supports Florida's leading law firms in providing pro bono legal services to Florida-based active-duty military members. Florida now has eight different law firms representing service members pro bono through the GI LAW program. The FDVA Office of General Counsel provides training and assistance on the GI LAW program to Florida military base legal offices.

Hope Navigators. 'Hope Navigators' guide Floridians on an individualized path to prosperity, economic self-sufficiency, and hope by focusing on community collaboration between the private sector, faith-based community, nonprofits, and government entities to break down traditional community silos, to maximize resources and uncover opportunities. Services performed by the FDVA Patriot Navigators include but is not limited to:

- Identifying veteran/family member goals and barriers to achieving success.
- Providing referrals to local, community-based resources for struggling veterans/families in crisis to fulfill special needs that can't always be met through traditional means.
- Providing one-on-one mentoring and support to develop a plan to achieve economic-self-sufficiency.
- Providing senior veteran support to help them to live productive lives/and age well wherever they choose.

FDVA is in the development stage of creating a performance measure for the bureau and will submit a budget amendment during the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Department Partnerships

Florida Veterans Foundation

In 2008, the Florida Legislature established the Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) as a Direct Support Organization of the FDVA. The Foundation operates for the direct and indirect benefit of the Veterans of Florida, the FDVA, State Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) and County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO). The FVF is also a nonprofit organization operating for charitable and educational purposes under Section

501(c) (3). While many of Florida's Veterans successfully transitioned to a post-military career, many encountered challenges that impede their progress. Veterans report priority services needed during this transition were employment assistance, transportation, housing, legal issues, mental health, and utility assistance in emergencies.

The FVF team is composed of a volunteer Chairman and Board of Directors. The majority of the foundation directors are retired, military disabled Veterans who donate more than 40 hours per week of their time to support the foundation's mission to align support with the FDVA mission of advocacy to ensure greater impact for Veterans throughout the state of Florida.

Veterans Florida (Florida is for Veterans, Inc.)

Veterans Florida (Florida is for Veterans, Inc.) is a non-profit corporation created by the state of Florida in 2014 to help Veterans fully transition to civilian life in the Sunshine State. *Veterans Florida* administers the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program to create and operate small businesses and secure meaningful skills-based employment. In addition, *Veterans Florida* implemented powerful tools for Florida businesses to recruit trained Veterans to meet workforce needs. *Veterans Florida* connects Veterans with the employer and assists them in establishing a business through the Career Services Program, Veterans Agriculture Program, Entrepreneurship Program, and the U.S. Department of Defense SkillBridge Program. *Veterans Florida* staff is composed of Veterans with experience in state veterans' programs, economic development, and workforce development. FDVA provides support services to properly oversee and execute duties established under Section 295.21(3), Florida Statutes.

List of Potential Policy Changes Affecting the Agency Budget Request

The department has not identified any policy changes affecting the Legislative Budget Request.

FDVA continues to work closely with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and monitor the requirements and feasibility of future long-term care needs for Florida's Veterans. The department will analyze the possibility of new Veterans' Homes construction and other options to assist aged and disabled Veterans. FDVA continues to monitor and adjust to federal programs' changes, always-remaining current on USDVA directives and new benefits regulations.

Each department division/program has distinct priorities and functions and serves its respective stakeholders pursuant to the duties and responsibilities conferred upon the department. The priorities and policies of each program are considered when determining the department goals and objectives. In providing a wide range of services, it is also necessary to consider the trends and conditions that affect Florida as a whole when formulating the strategic direction of FDVA. Without funding assistance by the state government, many worthwhile programs, projects, and services would not be undertaken.

DEPARTMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE FIVE-YEAR PERIOD 2024-25 through 2028-29

FDVA's Long Range Program Plan for Fiscal Years 2024-25 through 2028-29 includes goals and priorities consistent with the needs of Florida Veterans. The department's priorities consider statutory mandates as well as the needs, character, and complexity of the population we serve. These goals acknowledge the changing needs of Veterans, from the decreasing World War II and Korean War Veteran population to the increasing number of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) service members transitioning to Veteran status.

As the needs of the Veteran population of the state are assessed, and new requirements emerge, the department will pursue opportunities to expand their role in the long-term care arena. Multiple source data compiled by the USDVA, Census Bureau and health care entities relate that Veteran illnesses/conditions or service-connected infirmity have grown substantially with each conflict.

This trend points to an increased need for short-term and long-term health care for Veterans beyond the capacity that exists in Florida today. It further points to an increased need to conduct research, compile and analyze data to ensure the department is reaching out to the diverse population of Veterans in the state. Embracing new technology initiatives will be paramount to effectively transition the department to meet future regulatory and compliance requirements. FDVA will strive to address new initiatives while maintaining the Division of State Veterans' Homes with minimum fiscal impact to the state. Importantly, the department will seek out opportunities to partner with other agencies, departments, and organizations to maximize the limited resources available to meet our Veterans' needs both today and well into the future.

Department priorities were selected in terms of the greatest positive impact for Florida Veterans and return on investment to the state when applicable. The department's expansion in outreach activities, promoting new initiatives, increasing the number of long-term health care beds for our aging Veterans, and providing quality care in our State Veterans' Homes promotes the department's vision for *"the FDVA as the premier point of entry for Florida veterans to earned services, benefits and support."* A self-examination was accomplished at FDVA through a 2023 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. Anticipated department priorities for the five-year period from FY 2024-25 through 2028-29 are prioritized based on the needs and SWOT analysis. The department's strengths promote and provide support to serve Florida's 1.5 million Veterans, their families and provide excellent quality of care to elder and disabled Veterans at the State Veterans' Homes. The identified weaknesses provide an opportunity to develop a strategy to hire the best available professional workers and develop methods to train current staff and address increased employee turnover. The department seeks to strengthen staff capacity and comparative pay to recruit, train and retain qualified staff. In addition, the department is seeking resources to increase technology equipment for telework, improve technology equipment and software systems. The department developed and executed an emergency coordination plan for the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disaster emergencies.

Trends and Conditions Statements

List of Changes Which Would Require Legislative Action

The department's requests follow the Governor's directives for improved efficiencies and effectiveness of state government. Department is focusing on the following priorities that will request Legislators' support during the 2024 Legislative Session.

Priorities for the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

- I. Additional staffing request for the Bureau of Field Services at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' new outpatient clinic in North Jacksonville and four new medical centers across the state.
- II. Request for funding for the implementation of the veterans' dental care grant program that was codified in 2023, Section 295.157, F. S.) without funding. The dental care grant program is established to help expand access to dental care services for Veterans.

Priorities for the Division of State Veterans' Homes

- I. Continuing funds request for Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) at the State Veterans' Homes. These projects encompass site-specific maintenance plans, replacement of fixed capital outlay and emergency repairs at the facilities.
- II. Budget authority to purchase and replace durable furniture, medical and non-medical equipment for the State Veterans' Homes. The State Veterans' Homes will replace old and obsolete medical and non-medical equipment that has reached or exceeded its useful life.
- III. Additional staffing request for the direct care (Mission Essential Skilled Nursing) positions at six State Veterans' Nursing Homes to ensure adequate staffing levels to maintain federal and state mandated requirements.
- IV. Authority for the remaining balance of the required staff for the start-up operations of Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando.
- V. Requests an increase in budget authority to purchase software designed to transform both the Veteran and employee experience by deploying a long-term strategy that includes collecting veteran and employee feedback to make proactive, data driven improvements in our State Veterans' Homes.
- VI. Budget authority for a cost share grant with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the design and construction of a State Veterans' Nursing Home in Collier County. Collier County provided funding for the thirty-five percent matching funds.

Priorities for Executive Direction and Support Services

- I. Request funds for the technology infrastructure replacement of manual security practices of the department.
- II. Request funds for the technology infrastructure refresh of wireless communications access points and services that are not compatible with Windows 11 operating system.

Trends and Conditions Statements

- III. Request funding for six Other Personal Services' positions to supplement existing departmental information technology resources, focused on the Florida PALM project, to ensure a successful transition from FLAIR to the Florida PALM solution.

FDVA requests budget authority to support *Veterans Florida* (Florida is For Veterans, Inc.) for the following program.

- I. The department requests an increase in funding to meet the duties established under s. 295.21(3), F.S., which include statewide efforts to assist Veterans in securing meaningful skills-based employment or assist Veterans create and operate small businesses.
- II. The department requests an increase in funding to ensure that the organization *Veterans Florida* will meet the duties and responsibilities established by the Legislature under Section 295.22(3), Florida Statutes, to implement and administer the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program.
- III. The department requests funding to establish and implement an Occupational License Reciprocity Program. This program will allow Veterans with documented licensure from military service to transition those licenses to the public sector where licensure is a requirement for employment.

Further, FDVA maintains essential operating budget levels to carry out the general support functions to serve Florida's Veteran population and their significant issues and comply with new initiatives and regulations from both the federal and state governments. The department will continue its efforts to meet compliance deadlines while streamlining operational processes.

During the coming five years, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs will strive to ensure Florida maintains its special recognition as the most veteran-friendly state in our nation. We will pursue initiatives that allow us to remain at the forefront of veteran advocacy and ensure we maintain safe and secure State Veterans' Homes for those in need of care during fragile years.

The department will continue to lead the Governor and First Lady's efforts to reduce suicide among Florida's civilian population, especially servicemembers, Veterans and their families, through a host of public health and social programs and initiatives.

The department will convene a state interagency military and civilian team of leaders, organizations, and businesses to develop an implementation plan to advance the VA's National Strategy for Preventing Suicide while incorporating evidence-based strategies, programs, and practices. These evidence-based approaches, at end state, will help communities sharpen their focus on preventative measures that will lead to the greatest impact on preventing suicide. Critical to our success, as with all levels of society (local, state, and federal) will address gaps in responses, track the progress of prevention efforts and evaluate their impact. Then, evaluate data produced through program implementation and monitoring to provide information on what works to reduce rates of suicide and associated risk and protective factors. Finally, communicate these activities across all social media platforms to ensure this important issue remains at the forefront of state level concerns.

Trends and Conditions Statements

The department will further focus more on Women Veteran issues through its “Fact Finding Committee on Women Veteran Benefits and Communications.” The Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Fact-Finding Committee on Women Veteran Benefits and Communications was created to assess the needs of Women Veterans in Florida and if Veterans’ benefits, and FDVA and VA communications, are tailored correctly to women veterans. Florida has approximately 1.5 million veterans of which 165,000 are women. It is important that state and federal Veteran benefits are accessed by all eligible Veterans. Because services and communications are generally geared toward male Veterans, this Fact-Finding Committee assesses from women veterans their opinions and any recommendations for improvement. The Fact-Finding Committee will build on its findings.

Further, FDVA will remain mindful of state budget constraints and realities, and only request personnel and funding essential to its mission of veteran advocacy and providing quality long-term care.

A consolidated list of benefits available to Veterans and their families is located on the department’s web site at www.FloridaVets.org.

List of All Task Forces and Studies in Progress

#	Task Forces and Studies in Progress	Bill or Statutes	Web Address - Implementing Bill or Statutes
1.	Blue Angels Foundation	2670 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	blueangelsfoundation.org
2.	Empath Adult Day Center - Veterans	2492 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Empathhealth.org
3.	Five Star Veterans Center Homeless	2404 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	5starveteranscenter.org
4.	Florida Veterans Foundation	1466 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	helpflvets.org
5.	Florida Veterans Legal Helpline	1001 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	veterans-legal-helpline
6.	Florida Veterans Suicide Prevention - Fort Freedom	2871 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Myfortfreedom.org
7.	Florida Veterans Suicide Prevention	2383 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Helpflvets.org
8.	Home Base Florida Veteran & Family Care	1995 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Homebase.org
9.	Innovative Mental Health for Veterans and their Families	1131 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Operationwarriorresolution.org
10.	K9s For Warriors - Veterans Mental Health Support	1494 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	K9sforwarriors.org
11.	Quantum Leap Farm - Veteran Equine Assisted Therapy	1624 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	QuantumLeapFarm.org
12.	SOF Missions - Suicide Prevention	1002 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	sofmissions.org
13.	The Fire Watch Project, Inc.	2851 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	thefirewatch.org
14.	The Transition House Homeless Veterans Program	2853 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Thetransitionhouse.org
15.	Women Veterans Ignited	2299 – Ch 2023-239, line 593A	Forwomenvets.org

As of June 30, 2023

Performance Measures and Standards LRPP Exhibit II



GI BILL
JUNE 22, 1944

FDVA
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
www.FDVAVa.org



Exhibit II – Performance Measures and Standards

Department: Veterans' Affairs			Department No: 50	
Program: Services to Veterans			Code: 50100000	
Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance			Code: 50100700	
NOTE: Approved primary service outcomes must be listed first.				
Approved Performance Measures for FY 2021-22 (Words)	Prior Year Approved Standards FY 2021-22 (Numbers)	Prior Year Actual FY 2021-22 (Numbers)	Approved Standards FY 2022-23 (Numbers)	Requested Standards FY 2023-2024 (Numbers)
Value of cost avoidance because of retroactive compensation.	\$99,582,672	\$230,331,508	\$101,574,325	\$103,605,811
Value of cost avoidance because of issue resolution.	\$23,929,137	\$66,041,027	\$24,407,720	\$24,895,874
Number of veterans served.	105,172	197,084	107,275	109,421
Number of claims processed.	24,076	41,100	24,558	25,049
Number of services to veterans.	523,792	416,673	534,268	544,953

Office of Policy and Budget - June 2023

Exhibit II – Performance Measures and Standards

Department: Veterans' Affairs			Department No: 50	
Program: Services to Veterans			Code: 0100000	
Service/Budget Entity: Division of Long-Term Care			Code: 50100100	
NOTE: Approved primary service outcomes must be listed first.				
Approved Performance Measures for FY 2021-22 (Words)	Prior Year Approved Standards FY 2022-23 (Numbers)	Prior Year Actual FY 2022-23 (Numbers)	Approved Standards FY 2023-24 (Numbers)	Requested Standards FY 2024-25 (Numbers)
Occupancy rate for homes in operation 2 years or longer.	90%	80.5%	92%	95%
Percent of State Veterans' Homes in compliance with quality-of-care health care regulations.	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of State Veterans' Homes beds available	1,102	1,102	1,102	1,102
<p>Note: As of June 29, 2023, the Ardie Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home was certified by Agency for Health Care Administration for 120 beds, and the Alwyn C. Cashe State Veterans' Home was certified by Agency for Health Care Administration on July 6, 2022, with 112 beds. The 232 beds out of the 1,102 are for our two new homes. Ardie R. Copas SVNH obtained their VA certification. Alwyn C. Cashe is working on obtaining their VA certification.</p>				

Office of Policy and Budget - June 2023

Exhibit II – Performance Measures and Standards

Department: Veterans' Affairs			Department No: 50	
Program: Services to Veterans			Code: 50100000	
Service/Budget Entity: Executive Direction and Support Services			Code: 50100400	
NOTE: Approved primary service outcomes must be listed first				
Approved Performance Measures for FY 2021-22 (Words)	Prior Year Approved Standards FY 2022-23 (Numbers)	Prior Year Actual FY 2022-23 (Numbers)	Approved Standards FY 2023-24 (Numbers)	Requested Standards FY 2024-25 (Numbers)
Administration costs as a percent of total agency costs.	6.8%	3.5%	6.8%	6.8%
Administrative positions as a percent of total agency positions.	4.4%	2.0%	4.4%	4.4%

Office of Policy and Budget - June 2023

Assessment of Performance for Approved Performance Measure LRPP Exhibit III



Exhibit III – Performance Measures Assessment

LRPP Exhibit III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
Measure: Number of Claims Processed

Action:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Outcome</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Output</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards | |

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
24,076	41,100	17,024	40%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

Numbers increased significantly due to COVID restrictions being lifted/reduced. Although we saw a decrease in staffing; FDVA offices co-located at respective VHA facilities and VBA re-opened and were able to handle an influx of Veterans seeking assistance.

External Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix the Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws Are Working Against the Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

Numbers increased significantly due to COVID restrictions being lifted/reduced. Although we saw a decrease in staffing; FDVA offices co-located at respective VHA facilities and VBA re-opened and were able to handle an influx of Veterans seeking assistance.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

No problems of note.

Office of Policy and Budget – June 2023

Exhibit III – Performance Measures Assessment

LRPP Exhibit III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Veterans' Affairs
 Program: Services to Veterans
 Service/Budget Entity: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
 Measure: Number of Veterans Served

Action:

- Performance Assessment of Outcome Measure Revision of Measure
 Performance Assessment of Output Measure Deletion of Measure
 Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
105,172	197,084	91,912	55%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- Personnel Factors Staff Capacity
 Competing Priorities Level of Training
 Previous Estimate Incorrect Other (Identify)

Explanation:

Numbers increased significantly due to COVID restrictions being lifted/reduced. Although we saw a decrease in staffing; FDVA offices co-located at respective VHA facilities and VBA re-opened and were able to handle an influx of Veterans seeking assistance.

External Factors (check all that apply):

- Resources Unavailable Technological Problems
 Legal/Legislative Change Natural Disaster
 Target Population Change Other (Identify)
 This Program/Service Cannot Fix the Problem
 Current Laws Are Working Against the Agency Mission

Explanation:

Numbers increased significantly due to COVID restrictions being lifted/reduced. Although we saw a decrease in staffing; FDVA offices co-located at respective VHA facilities and VBA re-opened and were able to handle an influx of Veterans seeking assistance.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- Training Technology
 Personnel Other (Identify)

Recommendations:

No problems of note.

Office of Policy and Budget – June 2023

Exhibit III – Performance Measures Assessment

LRPP Exhibit III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance
Measure: Number of Services to Veterans

Action:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Outcome</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Output</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards | |

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
523,792	416,673	(-107,119)	19%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

We made significant improvement in closing the gap between previous FY approved standards and actual results (67% to 19%). Due to COVID many Veterans learned about services available to them online, services which did not require the assistance of Service Officer. During COVID we lost our contract with DMDC, which prevented us from tapping into those FL Veteran exiting the Military.

External Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix the Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws Are Working Against the Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

We made significant improvement in closing the gap between previous FY approved standards and actual performance (67% to 19%). Due to COVID many Veterans learned about services available to them online, which did not require the assistance of a Service Officer. During COVID we lost our contract with DMDC, which prevented us from tapping into those FL Veteran exiting the Military.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

Continue outreach activities and reinstate contract with DMDC.

Office of Policy and Budget – June 2023

Exhibit III – Performance Measures Assessment

LRPP Exhibit III: PERFORMANCE MEASURE ASSESSMENT

Department: Veterans' Affairs
Program: Services to Veterans
Service/Budget Entity: The Division of Long-Term Care
Measure: Occupancy Rate for Homes in Operations Two Years or Longer
Action:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Outcome</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Assessment of <u>Output</u> Measure | <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Measure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adjustment of GAA Performance Standards | |

Approved Standard	Actual Performance Results	Difference (Over/Under)	Percentage Difference
90%	80.5%	N/A	-9.5%

Factors Accounting for the Difference:

Internal Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personnel Factors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Competing Priorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Level of Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previous Estimate Incorrect | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Explanation:

FDVA, like other state agencies, was unable to recruit and retain highly skilled, professional employees at a time when the demand for nursing services continues to increase. The COVID19 pandemic, county wide nursing shortages, and low salaries, are the main impediments to hiring and retaining qualified nursing staff personnel.

External Factors (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Resources Unavailable | <input type="checkbox"/> Technological Problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Legislative Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Disaster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Target Population Change | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This Program/Service Cannot Fix the Problem | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Current Laws Are Working Against the Agency Mission | |

Explanation:

FDVA, like other state agencies, was unable to recruit and retain highly skilled, professional employees at a time when the demand for nursing services continues to increase. The COVID19 pandemic, county wide nursing shortages, and low salaries, are the main impediments to hiring and retaining qualified nursing staff personnel.

Management Efforts to Address Differences/Problems (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personnel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Identify) |

Recommendations:

Division of State Veterans' Homes Leadership continues with their efforts to promote the safety and welfare of residents and staff. Admissions are returning to all veterans' homes. The Nursing Home Staff Incentive plan implemented in August 2022, meritorious bonus, better use of OPS part-time staff will more closely align the salaries and incentives of FDVA Homes Program Staff to that of their private sector and federal counterparts, and simultaneously ensure they continue to receive all training possible, improve veteran care and increase the occupancy in all of the State Veterans' Nursing Homes.

Performance Measure Validity and Reliability Exhibit IV



FDVA 

Exhibit IV – Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Measure: Value of Cost Avoidance Because of Retroactive Compensation

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source "VetraSpec" is a web-based Veterans' claims management software system, which is being currently used by more than 32 states.

A Veteran files a claim for benefits on a specific date, but the determination is not made on that date. The process is lengthy and cumbersome and can take years. If a Veteran is awarded a monetary benefit each month, that monthly benefit is judged to have become valid back to the date of the original claim. While the Veteran will receive that amount for each month in the future, 'retroactive compensation' refers to a bulk award given to a Veteran for those months when the claim was in process. The value of the retroactive award garnered by a Veteran is entered into the VetraSpec system upon notice of the claim decision. The figure can be retrieved and totaled with other awards whenever warranted.

Validity:

The performance measure is valid because it measures the increase in the dollar amount associated with "Retroactive Compensation" activities of the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance, Bureau of Veterans' Claims Services and compares that quantifiable amount to prior years' data. The dollar value of 'retroactive compensation' is a direct cost avoidance to the state of Florida, which would otherwise be required to provide needed services. Also, the Veteran is able to take this money and insert it back into Florida's economy in the form of housing, goods, and services.

Reliability:

The performance measure is reliable because amount of "Retroactive Compensation" is a quantifiable value. "Retroactive Compensation" amounts are entered into VetraSpec. The dollar value of the service can be accessed and totaled for any given time period (usually quarterly/annually). USDVA costs and Bureau quantification methods are standardized.

Office of Policy and Budget – June 2023

Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Measure: Value of Cost Avoidance Because of Issue Resolution

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source "VetraSpec" is a web-based Veterans' claims management software system, which is currently being used by more than 32 states.

The Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance helps Veterans navigate the confusing and complex process to obtain benefits from the USDVA. The services result in monthly monetary benefits, in addition to determining, verifying, and obtaining eligibility for medical treatment, medications, wheelchairs, hearing aids, ambulance bill reimbursement, lost check replacement, eyeglasses, home improvement disability grants, clothing allowances, parking placards, prosthetics, and other benefits within the VA system. This service provides Florida Veterans with significant economic value. These activities are called 'issue resolutions.' Issue resolutions are measured in terms of the dollar value of the benefit received. Those dollar benefits are either clear (ambulance bill reimbursement) or given a consistent value determined by the USDVA (handicap parking placards). The value of the issue satisfied for the Veteran is entered into the VetraSpec system by FDVA Veterans' Claims Examiners. The figure can be retrieved and totaled with other awards whenever warranted.

Validity:

The performance measure is valid because it measures the increase in the dollar amount associated with "Issue Resolutions" and compares that quantifiable amount to prior years' data. The values are consistent and clearly defined for the claim's examiners.

Reliability:

The performance measure is reliable because the amount of "Issue Resolution" is a quantifiable value. "Issue Resolution" amounts are entered into VetraSpec. The dollar value of the service can be accessed and totaled for any given time period (usually quarterly/annually). USDVA costs and Bureau quantification methods are standardized.

Office of Policy and Budget – June 2023

Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Measure: Number of Veterans Served

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

To meet federal government 2016 Digit to Digit data management requirements and to facilitate operating within this new digital environment, FDVA has converted to a digital data compliant platform known as "VetraSpec." VetraSpec, currently in use by 32 states, does not currently track all Veterans claims we support that are initiated by County Veteran Service Officers, as counties have no requirement to purchase a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs compatible Digit-To-Digit (electronic) claim filing and tracking software.

FDVA personnel provide any form of service to a veteran record the data in VetraSpec. The system uses a variety of factors (name, birth date, social security number, etc.) to determine if the Veteran has been seen during the fiscal year. All first visits during a fiscal year are determined to be either "unique" or "other" Veterans' and a count of those Veterans' results in the number of Veterans served in a given period. Resources consist of FDVA representative entering the information into VetraSpec and resulting database reports.

Germane to this new digital operating environment is that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs now sends Veterans' claims to whichever VA Regional Office has the lowest workload in claims processing.

Validity:

The performance measure is valid because it demonstrates the number of new Veterans being serviced by FDVA Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCE's) for claims and related earned benefits and services and validates the department's mission of outreach to all Veterans across the state is working. It is a valid determination of claims specific workload for the VCE's.

Reliability:

The performance measure is reliable because the information is consistently recorded in the database and can be replicated in the multiple reports required each year. The process is clearly defined, and the database is set up to determine if the Veteran is unique to the fiscal year.

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Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance

Measure: Number of Claims Processed

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source "VetraSpec" is a web-based Veterans' claims management software system, which is currently being used by more than 32 states.

A claim is a request filed by a Veteran seeking a benefit or service. Each one of these claims processed by FDVA Veterans' Claims Examiners is entered into VetraSpec. The database stores and calculates the number of claims processed in any given period.

Validity:

The performance measure is valid because increasing the number of claims processed shows the increase in value of service to Veterans by the department in Florida. It is a valid determination of workload for FDVA's Veterans' Claims Examiners.

Reliability:

The performance measure is reliable because the process is clearly defined, and the database can make a simple count of claims filed in a fiscal year. The information is consistently recorded in the database and can be replicated in the multiple reports required each year.

Office of Policy and Budget – June 2023

Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: The Division Long-Term Care

Measure: Number of State Veterans' Homes Beds Available

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The Agency for Health Care Administration had issued operating licenses with an allowable maximum beds' capacity for each State Veterans' Homes (one assisted living State Veterans' Domiciliary home and eight State Veterans' skilled nursing facilities). Each of the skilled nursing facilities was constructed and licensed for 120 beds, except one, which has 112 beds. The Agency for Health Care Administration has licensed the State Veterans' Domiciliary Home for 150 beds.

Methodology: Examine nine (9) facilities licenses and add total beds.

Validity:

The measure is valid because it measures the numbers of State Veterans' Homes beds in Florida.

Reliability:

The measure is reliable because the number of beds is quantifiable, i.e., additional homes (beds) are constructed and licensed or they are not. The process of construction and licensure is formal, measured, and certifiable. The collection method is standardized.

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Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: The Division of State Veterans' Homes

Measure: Occupancy Rate for Homes in Operations 2 Years or Longer

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The measure reflects the need for and utilization of Veterans' Homes in Florida. The data source is the Health Information System database—the software tool utilized by the department for billing and resident care tracking.

Methodology: A 'patient care day' is a unit of time (one calendar day) during which the services of the facility are used or held for their use (bed hold) by a resident. When the billing month closes, the total number of patient care days is added, then divided by the number of days in the month. That quotient is further divided by the total number of beds in the facility. The final number is the occupancy rate for the facility, reflecting the percentage of occupancy for the month. Each month's average is added at the end of the fiscal year, and then divided by twelve to give the occupancy rate for the fiscal year.

Validity:

The measure is valid because it gauges the actual utilization of State Veterans' Homes. Use of a facility is a signal of need, and if the facilities are needed the state is justified in their operation. The number of beds is quantifiable and fixed, as are the number of days in each calendar month.

Reliability:

The measure is reliable because it is verifiable and repeatable. The number of patient care days is constantly audited by the various insurance companies and Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services in the billing cycles, and the accuracy is validated through those audits.

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Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: The Division of State Veterans' Homes

Measure: Percent of State Veterans' Homes in Compliance with Quality-of-Care Health Care Regulations

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data sources are the survey results from the Agency for Health Care Administration, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The methodology involves extensive onsite inspections by each of the regulatory agencies listed. Upon completion of the inspection, results are given with explanations of findings. FDVA staff members participate in the exit conference and examine the final reports for notices of non-compliance with quality-of-care regulations.

Validity:

The measure is a valid gauge of quality of care in a facility because the licensing and inspecting organizations are recognized authorities in the long-term care field. The application of inspection interpretations is standardized by state policy and training.

Reliability:

The measure is reliable because the surveys represent a uniformly applied standard to which all long-term care facilities are held in Florida and the United States. The surveys are repeated at unannounced periods, and none are at the same time, so high standards of care must be maintained at all times.

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Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Executive Direction and Support Services

Measure: Administration Costs as a Percent of Total Agency Costs

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source is the Legislative Appropriations System/Planning and Budgeting Subsystem and the General Appropriations Act. The expenditure portion is from the Florida Accounting Information Resource (FLAIR).

The amount of the Executive Direction and Support Services (EDSS) expense is divided by the total department expense for the fiscal year, yielding a percentage of administrative support cost within the department as a whole.

Validity:

The performance measure is valid because keeping administrative costs low allows the department to focus their resources to the direct benefit of their constituents — Florida's Veteran population.

Reliability:

The measure is reliable because it is a measurable quantity for both the agency as a whole and the division. The definition of 'expense' is clearly outlined by the Legislature, as are the processes for completing year-end expense reports. The General Appropriations Act sets a budget that will maintain the EDSS costs within the parameters of the performance measure, and fiscal year end expense reports validate those goals have been met. FLAIR has tight controls by the Comptroller to ensure accurate reporting of expenditures.

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Exhibit IV -Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

LRPP EXHIBIT IV: Performance Measure Validity and Reliability

Department: Veterans' Affairs

Program: Services to Veterans

Service/Budget Entity: Executive Direction and Support Services

Measure: Administrative Positions as a Percent of Total Agency Positions

Action (check one):

- Requesting revision to approved performance measure.
- Change in data sources or measurement methodologies.
- Requesting new measure.
- Backup for performance measure.

Data Sources and Methodology:

The data source is the General Appropriations Act (GAA), listing the number of positions allocated to a budget entity and the total number of positions allocated to the department.

The number of Executive Direction and Support Services positions is divided by the total number of department positions, yielding a percentage of administrative support positions within the department as a whole.

Validity:

The performance measure is valid because the bulk of department positions should be in direct contact with Veteran clients, assisting them with their needs.

Reliability:

The measure is reliable because it is a verifiable quantity for both the department as a whole and the division. The GAA is a public document that anyone can cross check. A simple ratio will always generate a value that is comparable and repeatable across multiple years.

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Associated Activities Contributing to Performance Measures and Cost Summary Exhibit V & VI



Exhibit V - Identification of Associated Activity Contributing to Performance Measures

Measures Number	Approved Performance Measures for FY 2023-24 (Words)	Associated Activities Title
1	Increase value of cost avoidance due to retroactive compensation. Standard: \$101,574,325	
2	Increase value of cost avoidance due to issue resolution. Standard: \$24,407,720	
3	The number of veterans served. Standard: 107,275	Number of veterans served: FY 2022-23, Outcome = 197,275
4	The number of services to veterans. Standard: 534,268	Number of services to veterans (Bureau of Veterans' Field Services): FY 2022-23, Outcome = 167,103 Number of services to veterans (Bureau of Veterans' Claims Service): FY 2022-23, Outcome = 249,570
5	The number of claims processed. Standard: 24,558	Veterans' Benefits and Assistance, number of claims processed: FY 2022-23, Outcome = 41,100
6	Occupancy rate for State Veterans' Homes in operation for two (2) years or longer. Standard: 90%	Veterans' Domiciliary Home - Lake City/Columbia County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 52,244 Rate 95.4% Veterans' Nursing Home – Pot St. Lucie/St. Lucie County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 7,122, Rate 16.3% Veterans' Nursing Home - Daytona Beach/Volusia County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 34,682, Rate 79.2% Veterans' Nursing Home - Orlando/Orange County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 3,185, Rate 7.8% Veterans' Nursing Home - Land O' Lakes/Pasco County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 32,233, Rate 73.6% Veterans' Nursing Home - Pembroke Pines/Broward County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 34,528, Rate 78.8% Veterans' Nursing Home - Panama City/Bay County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 36,973, Rate 84.4% Veterans' Nursing Home - Port Charlotte/Charlotte County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 33,700, Rate 76.9% Veterans' Nursing Home - St. Augustine/St. Johns County: FY 2022-23, Outcome = Resident Days 39,466, Rate 90.1%
7	Percent of State Veterans' Homes in compliance with quality-of-care health care regulations. Standards: 100%.	
8	Number of State Veterans' Homes beds available. Standards: 1,102.	Health Care Number of Veterans' Homes Beds Available FY 2022-23, Outcome = 1,102.
9	Administration costs as a percent of total agency costs. Standards: 6.8%.	
10	Administrative positions as a percent of total agency positions. Standards: 4.4%.	
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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA): State of Florida agency that champions accessible, affordable, quality health care for all Floridians.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): A plan which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS): Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that administers the Medicare program and works in partnership with state governments to administer Medicaid, CHIP, and health insurance portability standards.

County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO): The county veteran service officer plays a critical role in the veterans' advocacy system and is often the initial contact in the community for veterans' services. FDVA trains and accredits them annually.

COVID-19: Corona-Virus Infections Disease 2019 is a type of virus. In December 2019, a newly identified virus has caused a worldwide pandemic of respiratory illness.

Medicaid: Medicaid is a program funded by the U.S. federal and state governments that pays medical expenses for people who are unable to cover some or all of their own medical expenses. Medicaid program was established in Florida in 1970.

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF): Operation Enduring Freedom began on Oct. 7, 2001, with allied air strikes on Taliban and al Qaeda targets. After 13 years, the United States and NATO ended their combat mission with Afghanistan on Dec. 28, 2014.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF): Also known as the Iraq War, the conflict covers the period March 20, 2003, through Sept. 1, 2010.

Operation New Dawn (OND): The new name was given to reflect a reduced U.S. role to the Iraq War, which was known as Operation Iraqi Freedom until Sept. 1, 2010.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that can cause serious illness.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): A mental health condition that develops following a traumatic event characterized by intrusive thoughts about the incident, recurrent distress/anxiety, flashback, and avoidance of similar situations.

State Veterans' Nursing Homes (SVNH)/(SNH): State owned, operated, and managed facility that provides 24-hour skilled nursing care to disabled veterans.

State Veterans' Domiciliary Home: State owned, operated, and managed facility that provides a supervised living arrangement in a home-like environment for adults who are unable to live alone because of age-related impairments or physical, mental, or visual disabilities.

Trends and Conditions Analysis (TCA): Consolidated statements that review the trends in the veteran population, veterans' needs, opportunities to address veterans' needs, threats/problems and factors that influence related outcomes as they apply to department priorities.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA)/(VA): A federal cabinet-level agency that provides near-comprehensive health care services to eligible military veterans at VA

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

medical centers and outpatient clinics located throughout the country; several non-health care benefits including disability compensation, vocational rehabilitation, education assistance, home loans and life insurance and provides burial and memorial benefits to eligible veterans and family members.

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA): Component of the USDVA responsible for providing benefits and services to veterans and their families in a responsive, timely and compassionate manner in recognition of their service to the nation.

Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCE): Skilled paralegal advocates responsible for assisting veterans in pursuing benefits from the USDVA through the claims process.

Veterans' Health Administration (VHA): Component of the USDVA responsible for delivery of quality medical care on a timely basis within the law to all authorized veterans and eligible dependents and survivors.