



BRIEFING SHEET

[Report 17-14](#)
August 2017State Auditor
[Joe Chrisman](#)

Wisconsin Veterans Home at King

Background

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at King is administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA). In 2016, King provided skilled nursing care to an average of 685 veterans and their spouses each day. Report 17-8 included our analyses of King's revenue, expenditures, and capital projects. This report (report 17-14) includes a review of resident care needs, staffing, regulatory requirements, complaints, and the results of our survey of King employees.

Key Findings

During our audit, we found:

- The care needs of residents increased from 2007 through 2016 based on several measures, such as the extent to which residents needed assistance with dressing and eating.
- Although King was authorized more than 80 additional nursing positions by 2013 Wisconsin Act 20, it has not been able to keep many of the positions filled. As of June 2016, 46.8 full-time equivalent nursing positions (9.3 percent) were vacant.
- In fiscal year (FY) 2015-16, King's use of overtime for nursing staff exceeded the amount it used immediately prior to the creation of the additional positions. The number of overtime hours worked by nursing staff increased from 36,800 in FY 2013-14 to 65,100 in FY 2015-16, or by 76.9 percent.
- From 2012 through 2016, the Department of Health Services (DHS) issued, on average, fewer citations to King for violations of federal nursing home regulations than it issued to other skilled nursing facilities in Wisconsin. Of the 184 citations DHS issued to King, one was in the highest severity category, for which it was assessed a civil penalty of \$76,900 in June 2016.
- King employees who responded to our survey generally indicated that the overall care provided at King was good, but raised concerns with issues such as the manner in which overtime is assigned, employee morale, and management responsiveness to employee concerns.

Key Recommendations

We recommend DVA report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by January 8, 2018, on its progress in filling vacant nursing positions and reducing the use of overtime; reviewing King's informal processes for addressing resident concerns; reviewing concerns expressed by residents; assessing training needs; ensuring adequate steps are taken to encourage employees at King to routinely report concerns regarding residents, including occurrences of resident abuse, neglect, and misappropriation of resident property; and reviewing concerns about employee morale and the perception that King's hiring practices are not fair and transparent.

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