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Governor Announces Opening of Nursing Facility for Veterans in Union Grove

UNION GROVE – At a news conference in Union Grove, Governor Jim Doyle announced today that he will approve funding in the budget to open a new 120-bed skilled nursing facility at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove on the Southern Center campus.

“Here in Wisconsin, we have a long history of providing excellent programs and services that support our veterans and their families. It is not lost on me that in a state of over 5 million people, there are 475,000 veterans in Wisconsin – one out of every 10 people in our state,” Governor Doyle said. “Today I am announcing that I will sign into law a provision that will allow us to provide even better services to Wisconsin veterans and their families.”

The Governor's action approves \$1.3 million in funding and 44.5 staff positions to begin the operation of the skilled nursing facility. Approximately 77,000 veterans over 65, or roughly 32 percent of the veterans in Wisconsin, live within 50 miles of the Southern Center.

The addition of the skilled nursing facility will allow the Southern Center to serve a full range of needs for veterans and their families throughout this region, the Governor said. In addition to a homeless center and a veterans cemetery, the Department of Veterans Affairs currently operates two community-based residential facilities at Union Grove and is in the process of constructing a new residential care apartment complex. The skilled nursing facility will provide a continuum of quality long-term care for the veterans whose health needs exceed those that can be met in the two existing facilities.

The Governor said the new facility will benefit the state economically as well, because it will create jobs in the region and leverage additional federal health care dollars to the state in the form of per diem payments to help veterans defray the cost of skilled nursing care.

“America's all-volunteer armed forces are the best the world has ever seen,” Governor Doyle said. “But the continued strength of our country depends in no small part on the continued strength of our commitment to the men and women who have served and sacrificed on our behalf. I am signing this provision because taking care of our veterans by making sure they receive the health care they need is the right thing to do to honor those who have served our country.”