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**GOVERNOR'S PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING
FISCAL YEARS 2022-2023
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Members of the Governor's Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation to you.

The New Hampshire Veterans Home was established under RSA: 119 in 1890 for the care and treatment of Civil War veterans and has since provided high quality, professional long-term care and treatment services to our state's elderly and disabled veteran population. The Veterans Home is presently a 250-bed long-term care facility. Supporting the Home's budget is revenue from the State of New Hampshire General Fund (46%), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (30%), and from individual resident's payments (24%).

The FY 2022-2023 Veterans Home budget reflects the Home's goals, priorities, and needs for the upcoming biennium.

This budget has been prepared and is being submitted upon the planning assumption of having a resident census of 225 veterans. The Home's current census is 135 with 82 active applications and 41 applicants that are approved but waiting in the candidate pool. Both the Life Enhancement Dementia Unit for veterans at risk for wandering and the Tarr Units, which is for veterans who have capacity, have veterans waiting for an appropriate bed.

Qualified staffing, particularly in Nursing, continues to be a challenge in terms of recruitment and retention in order to meet the increased resident census and care needs. Vacancies remain in these direct care positions and we will continue to fill them. The trend towards increased home care, assisted living and other alternative care programs has impacted the typical profile of our veterans being admitted at the New Hampshire Veterans Home – they generally are older, frailer and more disabled.

VA regulations mandate that qualified nursing staff is available on a daily basis to meet needs for nursing care in a manner and in an environment which promotes each resident's physical, mental and psychological well-being, thus enhancing their quality of care and quality of life. Additional challenges with women's health care, bariatric care, hospice care, dementia with behavior disturbances, as well as the specialized care of our Vietnam veterans, must also be addressed.

During the upcoming biennium, additional new and replacement equipment, beds and over head lifts will also be required to keep up with the greater care needs of our residents and the successful implementation of the Electronic Medical Records has required the increased use of computers and other electronic devices.

The New Hampshire Veterans Home has a tradition of providing high quality care and cost-effective operations in serving the disabled and elderly veteran population in New Hampshire. With the continuing support of Governor Sununu and this Committee, the Veterans Home will be able to continue in this tradition.

Respectfully submitted: Margaret D. Labrecque, Commandant