



PRESS RELEASE FROM THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

DEPARTMENT OF NEW JERSEY

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April 22, 2020

The membership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars is closely monitoring the COVID 19 situation at the Paramus and Menlo Park Memorial Homes and its effects on the veterans, spouses and Gold Star families residing in the homes. We all mourn the deaths and promise to every family member that we will use every resource available to ensure adequate staffing, funding, and procedures to care for those ill and prevent future infections. We owe a huge thank you to the 25 additional nurses who volunteered to assist the residents along with the 90 Veterans Affairs nurses and National Guard troops deployed to the homes.

As always, the leadership and dedicated staff of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs has been transparent, and to date no documented evidence of malfeasance has been presented. The VFW fully supports the investigation called for by Congressmen Gottheimer and Pascrell to discover any deficiencies these homes, and others across the country, may have for dealing with a pandemic of this magnitude.

The VFW has repeatedly expressed concerns that Governor Murphy's budget cuts, along with his failure to fill the New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Home Advisory Council vacancies, would impact the health and wellbeing of veterans. We will be conducting an independent review of the investigation findings to determine if any deficiency or Governor Murphy's budget cut of one million dollars from a veteran transportation program, which enabled these residents to obtain medical care from providers outside of the homes, had any impact in this crisis. There is currently a 42 %-member vacancy rate in the three New Jersey Veterans' Memorial Home Advisory Councils. These Councils were established by the Legislature to recommend standards and methods for application and termination of eligibility for admission to the Memorial Home, the standards of care, treatment, and discipline, governing the relationships between the Memorial Home and persons admitted thereto, determination and payment of amounts which members may be required to contribute toward the cost of care and treatment in accordance with their financial ability. Now more than ever we need these Advisory Councils fully staffed, and we demand the Governor appoint members into the vacant and deceased council positions.

Any concerned person wishing to comment may contact njvfwpowmia@gmail.com or adjutant@njvfw.com

Barbara Kim-Hagemann,
State Commander, Department of New Jersey, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

About the VFW: The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is the nation's largest and oldest major war veterans organization. Founded in 1899, the congressionally-chartered VFW is comprised entirely of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. With more than 1.6 million VFW and Auxiliary members located in 6,200 Posts worldwide, the nonprofit veterans service organization is proud to proclaim “NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS” than the VFW, which is dedicated to veterans’ service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs. For more information or to join, visit our website at vfw.org.