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AFGE, Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute Decry Severe Short Staffing in Veteran Health Care Facilities Revealed by New Survey

Fifty percent of survey respondents report that beds, units, and programs at veteran hospitals have been closed due to staffing and budget shortages

WASHINGTON – Today, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), AFL-CIO, the largest union representing 283,000 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees, and the Veterans Healthcare Policy Institute (VHPI) are calling on VA leadership and Congress to fully fund, staff and expand VA resources after shocking revelations from a new survey of approximately 2,300 VA employees and veterans.

Topline survey results include:

- Sixty percent of survey respondents reported losing key resources needed to serve veterans, especially staff, over the last four years.
- Fifty percent of survey respondents reported that beds, units, and programs have been closed due to staffing and budget shortages, even when there is a patient demand for such services.
- More than 20 percent of respondents who work at the VA say they have partially shifted their work away from direct veteran care towards monitoring and coordinating more expensive private sector care.

“The results of this survey show that the staffing crisis at the VA is hurting our veterans,” said AFGE National VA Council President Alma Lee. “For too long, VA workers have been asked to do more with less. VA leadership must continue to work with its union partners to address this staffing crisis and ensure the VA is equipped to provide the critical, direct services our veterans earned and want.”

According to the VA’s own [data](#), at the end of Q2 there were 64,909 existing vacancies.

“These shocking survey results should be a wake-up call to Washington,” said VHPI President Paul Cox, himself a Vietnam veteran. “Rather than outsource care to the costly, less prompt, and unaccountable private sector, lawmakers must fund more VA positions and properly resource

facilities. Only then can they honestly claim to support the nine-million veterans who rely on the VA's world-class care.”

Attached is a preliminary report outlining our findings. A copy of more in-depth survey results will be provided upon request.

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The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is the largest federal employee union, representing 700,000 workers in the federal government and the government of the District of Columbia.

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