

## Northwest Wisconsin Veteran's Clinic

*The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:*

- **That the Legislature and Veterans Administration continue to fully support and advocate for the Hayward VA Outpatient Clinic**

Northwest Wisconsin Veterans are limited in their availability to use the Department of Veteran's Affairs Health Care System. Much of Northwest Wisconsin is in the VISN 23 VA. There are the two community-based outpatient clinic located in Superior and Rice Lake Wisconsin that provides primary care to Veterans.

Prior to 2007 the VA assigned Northwest Wisconsin Veterans to the VA Medical Center in Minneapolis, MN. **This means that area elderly Veteran's must travel three to four hours to get routine medical care.** This is complicated by winter weather and elderly Veterans inability to transport them. Even with the Rice Lake clinic's re-opening the facility does not meet the local needs of our Veterans.

The creation of a clinic in Sawyer County significantly reduced the strain on the Twin Ports Outpatient Clinic and the Rice Lake Clinic. The Sawyer County clinic has reduced transportation problems experienced by Bayfield, Sawyer and some Ashland County Veterans. In addition the Hayward Clinic benefits Superior and Douglas County residents by freeing up space for local veterans and improving health care for all area residents.

The Hayward Clinic enhances the VA Health Care System present in Northwest Wisconsin. The four primary counties that would be served by a Veteran's Clinic in Hayward are Ashland, Bayfield, Sawyer and Washburn Counties. These four counties have some of the highest needs in the State with between 28% and 32% of our residents below the 185% poverty line. In comparison with other counties in the state, we rank 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> respectively of 72 counties in the State, with one being the most impoverished. The Veteran needs in Northwest Wisconsin are great and will be unmet without the Hayward Clinic in place.

For more information contact:

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