

Gov. Pritzker Honors Veterans Day by Opening New, State-of-the-Art Chicago Veterans Home

November 11 2020 11:33 AM



CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker today joined Senator Tammy Duckworth, the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs (IDVA) and the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB), to commemorate the opening of the new Chicago Veterans’ Home. The home is the first state veterans’ retirement facility to open in 20 years and the first to serve the Chicagoland area. Prior to construction of the Chicago home, the closest veterans’ homes were located in Manteno and LaSalle, causing hardship for those

wishing to remain in their communities. Completion of this long-awaited facility was made possible through funding in Governor Pritzker's bipartisan FY20 budget. The home will accommodate 200 retired Illinois veterans.

“As the proud son and grandson of Naval officers, I have a very personal commitment to Illinois' nearly 650,000 veterans,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “One of my earliest actions as governor was to undertake the restart of the first Illinois Veterans' Home directly serving the Chicagoland area, as well as building a new state-of-the-art facility to replace the aging facility in Quincy. It's my mission that Illinois will provide every possible support for our military men and women, their families and our veterans – those who have made sacrifice upon sacrifice so all of us can live free.’

“I'm so grateful that our dream of opening this Veterans Home is finally a reality and despite everything going on, we're able to be together to celebrate Veterans Day,” said U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth. “Our Veterans have sacrificed the unimaginable for the rest of us, putting country over self and redefining bravery time after time, tour after tour. It's on us to make sure we don't just pat our Veterans on the backs on Veterans Day—but honor them on the other 364 days of the year, too. That means expanding access to safe, affordable housing because we are all dishonored when any Veteran is forced lay their head down to sleep on the same streets they defended.”

The new 187,000 square foot, five-story facility is located on the Northwest side of Chicago and embraces the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community Living Center (CLC) guidelines, which advocate a culture change from a medical model to a resident centered model of care. Unlike many nursing homes of the past, a community living center resembles a family home as much as possible. The architecture of the Chicago Veteran's Home supports this resident focus by creating sixteen total “households.” Four of the households are specifically dedicated to residents with dementia care needs. Each floor is outfitted with original artwork in the form of colorful murals by local artist Indira Johnson.

“On this day when we honor those who bravely sacrificed everything for our freedom, it is fitting that we open this facility,” said Linda Chapa LaVia, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. “Though we can never repay the debt we owe to these fine men and women, we can honor the moral obligation we have to provide them with the best care available in their twilight years. We must take care of those who have taken care of us”.

“As this day is set aside to salute the veterans who served our country tirelessly, I would like to thank all those who contributed in diverse ways to ensure this project was completed successfully,” said Executive Director Jim Underwood, Illinois Capital Development Board.

Through Governor Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois Capital Program, IDVA and CDB will carry out a number of projects at Illinois Veterans’ Homes in the coming years, including a \$230 million project to rebuild the Illinois Veterans’ Home in Quincy. Veterans interested in applying for residence at the Chicago Veterans’ Home can should contact the home’s Administrator, T’Kira Siler-Wilkinson at tkira.wilkinson@illinois.gov for additional information.