

Final Report and Recommendations

State and Veterans Nursing Home Commission

June 11, 2007

This report is submitted as a summary of the activities, accomplishments, and continuing concerns of the State and Veterans Nursing Home Commission since the time of its creation under H. B. 05-1336 enacted in the 2005 session of the Colorado General Assembly.

The report consists of three parts. Part I contains the findings and recommendations of the Commission and has three sections: a background history of the Commission; a review of Commission accomplishments; and final recommendations for the future direction of the state and veterans nursing homes.

Part II provides information that the new Board of Commissioners of State and Veterans Nursing Homes will find of value in the transition stages of their work. This information outlines sources of information important for the understanding of the state and veterans nursing homes and guidelines for visits to nursing homes.

Part III includes current information on each of the homes including history, capacity, census, survey results, and major projects in progress.

Part I

A. Background

The origin of the Commission was in what may be described as a debacle in resident care and in the finances of the Fitzsimons State Veterans Nursing Home shortly after it opened in September, 2002. Without going into specific details, deficiencies were cited in the surveys of the State Department of Public Health and Environment and by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs relating to infection control practices and resident quality of care. The facility also incurred problems relating to its census count, financial issues, hiring, and retention of staff. A statement in a summary document from Pinon Management described the situation as a "...widespread systems breakdown throughout the operations and management of the facility."

It was in response to these problems that Governor Bill Owens appointed an accountability committee chaired by Lieutenant Governor Jane Norton to ensure that residents at Fitzsimons enjoy a high quality of life and receive superior medical care. The accountability committee met from December, 2004 to June, 2005 and submitted its report to the Governor on June 29, 2005. This

report contained twelve recommendations including support of legislation to create an ongoing oversight committee.

Two committees were created under provisions of H.B. 05-1336. The Legislative Oversight Committee, consisting of eight members of the General Assembly, was established with several important responsibilities, including the receipt of the recommendations from this Commission for legislation to be considered in the 2007 session. Copies of the Legislative Oversight Commission report are available at the Legislative Council office in the State Capitol Building.

Secondly, the present Commission, consisting of eleven members appointed by the Governor, was given the responsibility for considering the following issues that pertain to all six of the state and veterans nursing homes:

- The expertise and resources necessary to assure the ongoing provision of high-quality care at the homes;
- The appropriate state government agency to administer the nursing homes, as well as the authority and responsibilities of the agency;
- Mechanisms for assuring ongoing oversight of quality of care and fiscal matters related to the operation of the homes;
- Partnerships, consultative relationships, and other contractual relationships with the private nursing home sector;
- Any issue that the Legislative Oversight Committee is authorized to study or that the committee authorizes the commission to study; and
- Necessary legislative or budgetary actions to implement the Commission's recommendations.

The Commission was directed to submit a preliminary report to the Legislative Oversight Committee by December 31, 2005, and a final report to that committee by June 30, 2006. Recommendations to the Legislative Oversight Committee and other recommendations of the Commission are reviewed later in this report. Copies of the Commission's report are available from the Division of State and Veterans Nursing Homes, Human Services Building, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver. The state Board of Veterans Affairs and the United Veterans Committee of Colorado worked to achieve passage of this legislation.

The Commission began its meetings in September, 2005 and continued to meet almost every month through June, 2007. The Commission held a total of 18 meetings and subcommittees were appointed to bring recommendations on specific topics to the Commission for consideration. Commission members

were encouraged to visit the six nursing homes and each of these facilities was visited at least one time.

B. Accomplishments

Several significant changes have occurred in the state and veterans nursing homes in the past two years, many of which represent positive improvements. There remain, however, a number of challenges which require continuing oversight and the Commission commends the General Assembly for its interest in this area by enacting legislation to create a new, permanent Board of Commissioners of State and Veterans Nursing Homes (H.B. 07-1211). This bill was signed by the Governor on April 9, 2007, with an effective date of July 1, 2007. We welcome the establishment of the new Commission.

The Commission cannot take credit for all of the changes in the present operations of the state and veterans nursing homes but we hope that we served as a catalyst that encouraged action on the part of many others. The Commission has seen positive developments over the course of its existence and we celebrate these improvements. We believe that many of the changes will have beneficial impact on the veterans, their spouses and other family members, and all others who reside in the state and veterans nursing homes.

Recommended Legislation

Three bills originating with the Commission were submitted to the 2007 session of the General Assembly and all were enacted into law. H.B. 1211, as mentioned, creates the Board of Commissioners of State and Veterans Nursing Homes, a seven member board appointed by the Governor, with three appointees from the veterans' community, three from differing backgrounds of the nursing home industry, and a nursing home ombudsman. These appointees should provide expertise from a variety of experiences, certainly capable of continuing the advising role and guidance function that the legislation anticipates.

The second bill enacted this year was H.B. 07-1212 concerning the creation of the local advisory boards for each of the homes. Most of the homes already had such boards but their membership and their level of activity has considerable variances. These boards will become more effective as they are reestablished under the rule making authority of the Department of Human Services.

The third bill recommended by the Commission is S.B. 07-14 concerning the appropriation of funds to the central fund (the "505 fund") for the state and veterans nursing homes. The importance of this legislation is that it places in the statutes a specific provision that the General Assembly may appropriate an amount up to ten percent of the total gross revenue accrued by the central fund (the "505 fund") for the preceding year without changing the enterprise status of

these facilities. The appropriated funds may be for operational and capital improvement needs. Funds for capital improvements could result in federal funds matching the state appropriations under the VA state grant program with 65 percent federal money; 35 percent state money. The maximum state appropriation under this bill would amount to just over \$ 4 million, which could result in a VA match of over \$ 8 million.

Long Bill Appropriations

The Commission is pleased with the appropriation of \$ 917,000 that the Department of Human Services received for improvements at Homelake. This appropriation will be matched by the VA at the 65 to 35 percent ratio of federal to state money. These funds will be used to renovate the domiciliary units at Homelake, units that have not seen improvements for many decades.

The spokesman for the VA told the Commission that long promised improvements needed to be made in an expedited way this year for the state to continue to receive the federal VA per diem patient funding at the facility. The Commission and the Department of Human Services alerted the legislature's Capital Development Committee and Joint Budget Committee of this crisis situation and the needed funds were appropriated. Construction is expected to begin after October 1.

The Office of State and Veterans Nursing Homes

The Commission is pleased with the reorganization in the Department of Human Services that elevated the status of the nursing homes to an Office of State and Veterans Nursing Homes in the department. This administrative change means that the director of the office is a member of the executive director's chief advisors. The division is no longer relegated to a secondary position, lacking direct access to the executive director. The Commission commends this far-sighted action taken by the department and sees this change as beneficial to the residents of the homes.

Personnel Changes

The Commission followed closely personnel problems encountered at the nursing homes, particularly at Fitzsimons. We recommend that the new Commission also keep informed of progress and problems encountered as these facilities move forward. We are pleased with the progress in resolving some of the critical personnel issues but we are also aware of still unsettled difficulties in the personnel area.

As for progress being made at Fitzsimons, the department has given considerable attention to the personnel problems, from both the department level and with the appointment of a human resources specialist located at the facility.

These changes have resulted in the hiring for vacancy positions of RNs, LPNs, and CNAs more quickly, as timeliness in hiring is a critical factor in a competitive nursing market as in Denver. Other positions, dietary and custodial among others, are being filled more quickly than has been the case in the past.

Personnel positions at the top administrative levels are more problematic. Fitzsimons now has an excellent nursing home administrator but the selection process took eight months to fill. The director of nursing position has been vacant since February, 2007. Part of the problem is the result of the slowness of the state personnel system. Delays inherent in the personnel system work against the hiring of the top qualified persons in the highly competitive market where top-flight applicants do not need to wait several months to see if the position is actually theirs.

The difficulties presented in the hiring of these key positions stem, in part, from provisions of the Colorado Constitution. For example, residency requirements are specified and valuable time is taken to waive these requirements if there are not an adequate number of qualified candidates from Colorado. The "rule of three" means that the appointment shall be "one of three persons ranking highest on the eligible list for such persons" as determined by competitive testing, processes that, however worthwhile, again take time.

Medicare Certification

All of the state and veterans nursing homes have received or are in the process of receiving Medicare certification. This certification is good news for several reasons. In terms of resident care, it means that a resident who needs medical care may not need to be transferred to a hospital for that care; the care may be able to be provided in the nursing home. The nursing home will be able to provide a broader range of services, including out-patient services for Medicare recipients who need assistance but who do not need to have in-patient status. The favorable result is that the nursing home can provide these residents with the necessary continuity of care.

Medicare certification also brings financial benefits to the facilities. When residents have been transferred to another health care facility there is the likely possibility that they may not return to the nursing home, resulting in the loss of census revenue for the nursing home. Further, Medicare reimbursement is another source of revenue benefiting the financial picture at the homes.

Consulting Contract

The idea of a public-private partnership for the state and veterans nursing homes reaches back some time. In December, 2003, as the problems at Fitzsimons were becoming known, Governor Owens, by executive order, appointed Pinon Management to serve as temporary manager of the facility.

Following that decision, the work of the Fitzsimons accountability committee, reporting to the Governor in June, 2005, gave further significance to the idea of the public-private partnership. This report recommended that a contract administered by the division be implemented with a management company for the conduct of specific operational and management duties, with oversight by an independent committee.

The Commission, at its February, 2006 meeting, adopted a “bridge statement” recommending that the next RFP from the division be for consulting services rather than for contracted management services. This recommendation was based on the conclusion that the division with its expanded staff was now in position to permit a different style of consulting services. This recommendation was implemented and Pinon Management assumed a different role, that of a consultant to the Department of Human Services, in May, 2006.

The Commission is pleased with the work provided by the consulting firm hired under an RFP in 2006. Pinon Management has assisted the division in many respects, including arrangements at Fitzsimons in providing an interim nursing home administrator while the search process went on to find the new administrator. Similarly, an arrangement was made with Pinon for an acting director of nursing at Fitzsimons while the department is recruiting to fill that position. The temporary filling of these positions were critical steps in the operation of this facility.

In addition to the temporary filling of these positions, the consulting firm offers an independent, outside view of the nursing homes in areas, for example, of the clinical care being provided, the financial status, steps taken towards culture change, and staff training. This viewpoint is of value to the administration of the facilities and has been a helpful addition to the Commission’s work. The Commission emphasizes the importance of a meaningful public-private partnership and recommends that appropriate funding be maintained to continue the benefits of this partnership.

Quality Indicator Dashboard

Measurements of the performance of the state and veterans nursing homes will be available under a “dashboard” or “scorecard” being developed by Pinon Management in cooperation with the state office and the homes. There are four parts to the scorecard: (a) clinical; (b) financial; (c) census development; and (d) culture change or customer satisfaction. The ultimate purpose of the data collection is to enhance resident care and improve the overall outcomes of each facility by setting measurable goals for improvement with the ability to easily monitor each facility’s progress toward these goals.

Clinical data on resident care will be collected for quality profiles of each facility, e.g., pressure sores, number of falls, staff turnover, survey results, and

other indicators of the care provided. These data can be reviewed to discover trends in the facility over a period of time and also looked at in comparison with a large databank of information from other homes in Colorado and nationwide. As an example, if there are concerns in employee turnover the division could set targets for improvement with turnover rates not to exceed certain percentages for various groups of employees. The “dashboard” provides a reading in each facility showing whether they are hitting certain thresholds or are not reaching their targets. Alerts can be given to the facilities that are having a problem. The office or division will be able to put its strategies and objectives on the program and monitor its performance toward its objectives.

The satisfaction survey is designed to determine how well the nursing homes are doing from the point of view of the consumer. It will take the question “Will you recommend this home to others?” as part of the benchmark against which other homes are measured. There are approximately 4,000 other facilities nationally and 100 homes in Colorado that participate in this data collection survey.

C. Recommendations

Based on the findings summarized in this report the Commission submits the following recommendations for future work by the successor commission, the Department of Human Services and the Division of State and Veterans Nursing Homes. While some of the issues are settled at the moment, there are some systemic issues that need to be considered because these issues have the potential to create further problems.

(1) Each home in the state system needs to be financially self-sufficient so that none of the facilities represents a financial drain on the 505 fund. The management of each home needs to strive for economic success of that home, with the able assistance of the staff of the office and division of state and veterans nursing homes.

(2) The facilities need assistance in meeting their capital construction and life safety needs. The new commission will need to work with the department of human services in keeping the five-year construction and controlled maintenance plans up to date and brought to the attention of the General Assembly and its committees. As two examples of capital construction needs, immediate attention needs to be given to the following:

(a) A proposed domiciliary at Fitzsimons needs to be acted on quickly to assure that no other use is made of the vacant property on the southwest corner of the Fitzsimons campus. If not developed fairly soon other demands will be made for this land and the promised domiciliary might not have the space required for its building.

(b) The existing domiciliary at Homelake is in danger of being decertified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs unless promised renovation is forthcoming. Careful planning, on both a short- and long-range horizon, needs to be made for the continued use of this part of the Homelake campus. There are urgent life safety needs that must be addressed at this time and plans are in place or are being developed for renovation of these buildings.

(c) Any delay in improvements for life safety at the homes is not an option. These changes must be accomplished as soon as possible. The Commission hopes that adequate money will be appropriated by the General Assembly each year for this purpose but, if not, there is no alternative for the department of human services than to take money from the 505 fund to assure that all safety precautions have been taken for the residents of the homes.

(3) Each of the state and veterans nursing homes has its own unique characteristics and the differences of the homes should be respected. The individuality of the homes in location, their residents, the historical context by which they were established, and the needs of the facilities should be recognized and respected.

In order to assure quality of care and the financial stability for the state and veterans nursing homes, the functions of the Commission under H.B. 07-1211 are as follows:

- Advise the division and the various nursing homes
- Provide continuity, predictability, and stability in the operation of the nursing homes
- Provide guidance to future administrators at the nursing homes based on the collective institutional memory of the board of commissioners

Several tools are available to meet these responsibilities. The surveys of the state department of public health and environment and the VA may be monitored and reports on the financial picture and the census, as well as other information, are furnished monthly by the office and division of state and veterans nursing homes.

The consultants need to report freely and openly about their experience and findings at the homes. The dashboard of key quality indicators of the homes should provide valuable information on the four

areas listed previously: clinical care; financial data; census information; and culture change and customer satisfaction.

(4) Reference was made earlier to problems encountered in hiring for key personnel positions, particularly at Fitzsimons where the nursing home administrator and director of nursing positions were vacant for some time. The overall shortage of nurses in Colorado (and the nation) makes nursing positions difficult to fill.

Continued efforts need to be made to expedite the hiring process for positions of importance in the operation of the nursing homes. The nursing home administrator and director of nursing positions become vacant over time and the division needs to be able to act quickly to fill these positions. The competitive demand for qualified administrators and nurses is such that whatever steps can be taken need to be taken to respond to market demands to secure the best qualified personnel.

(5) The public-private partnership needs to be continued in a meaningful and sustained manner through appropriate funding. The idea of this partnership is that of a team working toward a mutual goal of enhanced resident care and financial viability of the facilities. The commission needs to have open access and communication with the consultants. It is our recommendation that funding for this partnership not fall below the present ratio of funding of approximately 60 percent state general fund appropriation and 40 percent 505 fund support.

(6) We recommend that the new commission visit the six state and veterans nursing homes to gain an understanding of the community in which each is located – the residents, families, staff, services provided, the area served, and the physical plant and its needs. The guidelines attached to this report are suggested as the approach that should be used for these visits.

(7) Another idea for the administration of the homes is the development of working relationships with the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the University Hospital, now relocated at the Fitzsimons campus of the university. This recommendation applies in particular to the Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home at Fitzsimons but could also apply to the other state and veterans nursing homes. The resources of the university and the hospital are many and varied and the nursing homes as well could provide expertise and experience of value to the university and its students. The Commission is hopeful that contacts will continue to develop for the mutual benefit of both entities.

Summary

Members of the Commission have been pleased to serve on the State and Veterans Nursing Home Commission and we hope that our service will benefit the veterans and their families at the state facilities. These facilities should provide the highest quality of care for the residents and achieving financial responsibility to the state in the management of the facilities. The goal that we would like to see accomplished is for the state and veterans nursing homes to become the standard against which all of the other nursing homes in Colorado are measured. We believe that this standard can be reached and maintained.

Part II

This part of the report provides information on some of the resources available to the new Commission and addresses relationships that the nursing homes have with other agencies. Resources available for the Commission are listed. The final section of this part provides guidelines for visits and reviews of the operation of the nursing homes.

The VA and the State DPHE

The common element shared by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is that both agencies conduct annual surveys of the state and veterans nursing homes. The surveys provide regulatory oversight and reviews of compliance with nursing home rules and regulations. In addition, investigations of complaints by residents, family members or others may be made on a spot basis.

The VA has other programs of assistance to the facilities and the veterans at nursing homes. The state construction grant program provides federal matching funds at 65 percent with a state match of 35 percent. The state match can be realized from any state or local source; the funds do not need to be appropriated from the state general fund, for example.

A federal per diem is provided by the VA for veterans in veterans nursing homes at a rate of \$ 67.71. The VA also contracts with private nursing homes for services provided at these facilities.

Relationship with Walsenburg

The Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home at Walsenburg is unique in Colorado in its governance and operation. This facility opened in 1993 and is operated by the Huerfano County Hospital District through a contractual arrangement with the state. The local district raised the money with a property tax mill levy to build the nursing home and it is attached to the hospital which was financed and constructed at the same time. Mill levy increases have been approved to provide direct funding to the facility as well as building maintenance, improvements, and equipment. Under the contract between the state and the local district, the nursing home building is scheduled to transfer to the county in 2012.

All but one of the employees at Walsenburg is employed by the local district. However, the VA will contract only with the state and this requires that there be a state presence at the facility, thus the position of "state project officer" was created. This official provides weekly and monthly reports to the state and,

technically, is a state employee, although the salary is paid by the local district. The local district has autonomy in the operation of the facility.

For further detail on the Walsenburg facility see page 18 of this report.

The Veterans Trust Fund

This fund is administered by the state Board of Veterans Affairs, a part of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The veterans nursing homes have received grant funds from this source for controlled maintenance, fixtures, equipment, and furniture, among other projects. The fund was established with an allocation by the General Assembly of part of the funds received under the master tobacco settlement between the state and tobacco companies. Grants from the fund are made on an annual basis and qualification for the grants is based on providing service to veterans.

Comparisons of State Support

Data from about four years ago, the most current available, shows the states that provide general fund support of state veterans nursing homes in the 50 states. In this report Colorado is in the minority of states (15) that does not provide support from this source, whereas 35 states – 70 percent – are listed as appropriating money from the general fund for their homes. Since the time of this report, Colorado has made modest appropriations from the general fund for the benefit of the homes. The important statistic, however, is that Colorado support is in the comparatively small number of states which provides none or only meager financing from its general fund for the veterans nursing homes.

(Source: “National Snapshot of State Vet Home Revenue Streams”, prepared by the National Association of State Veterans Nursing Homes)

The Central (505) Fund

The fund from which the state and veterans nursing homes are financed is known as the central fund or the 505 fund. The amount of money in this fund is constantly changing and it may be looked at as a checking account rather than a savings account. The fund fluctuates as money comes in from the various revenue streams and is spent to pay the bills for operations at the homes.

For expenses outside of the budget of each facility, such as for emergency expenses, the department would go to the state controller’s office for permission to make these expenditures. It is that office that makes those decisions after a request is forwarded by the department.

Resources Available

The Commission is impressed by the number of resources that assisted it in its work and believes that the new Commission will also find these individuals and organizations to be invaluable to its proceedings: The Office and the Division of State and Veterans Nursing Homes, the Department of Human Services, the State Board of Veterans Affairs, the United Veterans Committee, Pinon Management, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the advisory committee members from various state agencies.

Copies of the minutes of the Commission are available from the Department of Human Services, 1575 Sherman Street, Denver, CO 80203. The minutes are also posted on the department's web site at www.chds.state.co.us/svnh/statelegislativeoversightcommittee.htm.

Guidelines for Visits and Reviews of State and Veterans Nursing Homes

The Commission believes that it is important for its members to visit the state and veterans nursing homes so that commission members have some first hand knowledge of the physical plant, the resident population, the future plans and hopes for the homes. Becoming familiar with each of the homes, and understanding the unique challenges of each, will assist in discussing ideas for change and in making recommendations affecting these facilities.

It is critical to understand the purpose of these visits. The Commission suggests that they are not to be made as inspection or as surveys such as those conducted by the VA and the State Department of Public Health and Environment. It is suggested that the visits be made to familiarize members with the location, the administration and staffing, the resident population, the physical plant, and the general ambience of the facility.

We suggest that there are a number of things in visits to a nursing home that need to be remembered. First, consider your visit as a visit to a person's home. Respect should be given to the residents and to the staff of the facility. Absolute consideration should be given to privacy. Meet and converse with the residents. Respect the routines of the staff as they go about their work and remember that the needs of the residents come first. Some times of the day are busier than other times and give the staff the opportunity to assist the residents before asking questions of the staff or residents.

Do not ask questions about specific residents as that information is confidential. If a complaint is made by a resident during your visit, refer that complaint to the nursing home administrator for resolution.

Getting Started

Please notify the proper authority at the Department of Human Services or the Division of State and Veterans Nursing Homes of your intent to visit one of the homes. The division will then contact the home and possibly the consultant to the department to inform them of your intended visit. Give a specific time for your arrival. Meet the nursing home administrator and have a staff member accompany your group's tour.

Ask the nursing home administrator or the designated person responsible for your visit about the home – census, renovation projects, advisory board involvement, visits to residents, volunteer opportunities, social activities, and other relevant data.

What to Look For

Ambience

- Is the atmosphere welcoming and attractive?
- Are the rooms of the residents clean, comfortable and home-like?
- Are the residents clean, well-groomed and positioned comfortably?
- Is the facility clear and odor free?
- Are the residents engaged?

Staff

- Observe staff interaction with the residents. Do staff members show respect to the residents?
- Are staff members wearing identification badges?
- Do staff members respect the privacy of the residents?

Dining

- Observe a meal if the visit occurs during mealtime.
- Are residents offered choices in meal selection and for their dining times?
- Is the dining room home-like? (No use of horseshoe tables or trays)
- Is assistance offered to residents who need help in dining?

Culture Change

- Is there evidence of resident centered choices?
- Observe or sit in on any activities or events scheduled during the visit.

Visiting with Residents

If you have the opportunity to meet with residents, talk with them, do not interview them.

Tell them they have a beautiful home. Ask how long they have been there. Have a general conversation with them.

Activities

Look at the announcement board to see what events have been scheduled.

Are activities planned for most of the days?

Is the outside community involved with a number of the activities?

Completing the Visit

At the conclusion of the visit, note your impressions, based on observations made during the tour. Meet with the nursing home administrator to let the administrator know of your observations, both positive and negative. Identify specific concerns.

Talk with the administrator about the needs of the facility over the next five year period and the changes that are planned over that time. Discuss what the administrator has on a wish list of things that would be changed if it were possible that changes could be made.

Thank the administrator for the opportunity to visit the facility.

Part III

The Office of State and Veterans Nursing Homes, (OSVNH) operates 686 beds that provide skilled nursing home care and 46 beds for domiciliary care (at the State Veterans center at Homelake). The Office also provides adult day services for 11 clients at the Trinidad State Nursing Home. As an Office our average occupancy rate is 86.9 % compared to the state average of 83.8 %. The six homes are located in: Rifle, Aurora (Fitzsimons), Florence, Walsenburg, Trinidad, Homelake (San Luis Valley).

Rifle

The State Veterans Nursing Home in Rifle opened on June 6, 1987. It has a total of 100 operating beds, including a 12 bed special care unit with a current census of 78.4, or 82 % occupancy. Their most recent state survey cited three deficiencies that were immediately corrected. This would compare favorably to their county average of eight deficiencies. They have submitted a grant application in the \$3.5 million to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to address life/safety issues. The Rifle facility will be celebrating its 20 year anniversary and with that comes an aging building that will need life/safety and cosmetic updates.

Fitzsimons

The State Veterans Nursing Homes at Fitzsimons opened on October 20, 2002. The facility has 180 operating beds, including a 21 bed Alzheimer's unit and a 24 bed rehabilitation unit with a current census of 166.3, or 92 % occupancy. All facility beds are Medicare A certified. This facility is currently providing excellent care with above average occupancy and generates enough revenue to cover all its operating costs. They are one year ahead of their break-even scenario. The facility is currently in their survey window and no state or VA surveys have been conducted this year. During their last survey cycle they received better than average state and VA surveys. The Fitzsimons facility is a newer facility and will not require any major life/safety or capital construction.

Florence

The State Veterans Nursing Home in Florence opened in January 1976 and was dedicated as a state home on Veterans Day, November 11, 1976. It has 100 operating beds, including a 14 bed special care/Alzheimer's unit with a current census of 92, or 92% occupancy. During their last state survey they received four deficiencies that can easily be corrected. This compares favorably to their county average of 5.8 deficiencies. The Florence facility is positioned to complete phase III (the final phase) of a four-year project to provide a total remodel, including an HVAC system, life/safety updates, Alzheimer's dining room expansion, kitchen remodel and a major energy conservation makeover.

Walsenburg

The unique relationship that the state has with the State Veterans Nursing Home in Walsenburg is described on page 11 of this report.

This facility opened in April 12, 1993. It has 120 licensed beds, of which 118 are operational, including an 18 bed special care unit. The current census is 101, or 86 % occupancy. During their last state survey they received two deficiencies that can easily be corrected. This compares favorably to their county average of 14 deficiencies. The Walsenburg facility is completing an energy conservation project at a total cost of \$1.6 million. They are also preparing to complete a quality of life project by expanding the special care unit and patio area for these residents.

Trinidad

The Trinidad State Nursing Home opened on April 1, 1967. It has 119 operating beds and an Adult Day Service Program that serves 11 clients. The current census of 109 represents 92 % occupancy. During their last state survey they received 5 deficiencies and their county average was 13 (they are the only skilled nursing home in their county). They completed an energy conservation project at a cost of just under \$700,000. One of the benefits of the project was to provide the facility with a new boiler system. In order to meet the needs of its catchment area, the facility will open an Alzheimer's unit by the end of the fiscal year.

Homelake

The Colorado State Veterans Center in Homelake, originally known as the Soldiers and Sailors Home, opened in 1890. The Center consists of a nursing home and a 46 bed domiciliary. The new 60 bed nursing home opened in 1991 and has a current census of 52, or 87 % occupancy. During their recent state survey they received nine deficiencies that are being corrected (they received two back-to-back zero deficiencies from the state). Their recent survey of nine deficiencies does not compare favorably with the county average of two deficiencies. They also completed the VA survey with 15 Partially Met and four Not Met Deficiencies. The Plan of Correction has been completed and will address all deficiencies cited. This facility sits on a large campus with several designated state historical buildings and a cemetery with historical significance. They have completed an energy conservation project in the amount of \$810,000 and will begin a major domiciliary renovation for approximately \$4.2 million.

APPENDICES

Organization Chart, Colorado State and Veterans Nursing Homes

List of Persons Who Testified

Report “Current Progress in Staffing State and Veteran’s Nursing Homes in Colorado, 2006-2007”, prepared by the Human Resources Division, Colorado Department of Human Services

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