



NEWS FROM:

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VA grants improve health and safety at Veterans Homes

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Two recent U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs grants will have a direct impact on the quality of life for residents at New Jersey's three Veterans' Homes.

Top of the list is the installation of upgraded heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems for resident rooms at the New Jersey Veterans Home at Paramus is nearing completion.

In 2020, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs awarded two grants totaling \$3.6 million in fiscal year 2021 funds to renovate the Paramus HVAC system and provide automatic transfer switches at both the Paramus and Menlo Park Homes.

The project's scope is to replace the original, 20-year-old existing radiant heating/cooling panels in 190 resident rooms with new ceiling mounted fan coil units. It will also include the replacement of the existing chiller system including the tower, pumps, secondary chilled and hot water pump sets and all loop piping, including replacement of two rooftop energy recovery units at Building-2.

The New Jersey Department of Military and Veteran Affairs expects the HVAC upgrades to more efficiently meet the health needs of its elderly residents, as well as reduce the risks of airborne infectious disease.

"Modern ventilation systems that use high quality air filtration can reduce the transmission of airborne illnesses, such as COVID, influenza, and pneumonia," said Walter R. Nall, Acting Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs, New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.

To meet those needs, the HVAC systems will be using MERV 13 air filters.

MERV, which stands for Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value, is a scale created by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers. The higher the number on the 1-16 scale, the more effective the filter is in capturing particles. MERV 13 filters will capture approximately 50 percent of particles that measure .30 to one micron in size. For comparison, a single hair from your head is 70 microns in diameter. By operating the HVAC system 24/7, more germs will be captured because more air moves through the filters.

Further, the installation of automatic transfer switches at the Paramus and Menlo Park Homes will improve the homes' emergency management capabilities to ensure the residents' safety. The switches will ensure that air conditioning, refrigerators, and medical devices such as oxygen and breathing equipment will be available in the event of a sudden and prolonged loss of power at the facilities.

"I am excited about the benefits these improvements will have to the health and safety of our residents," said Brig. Gen. Lisa J. Hou, D.O., Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. "As a physician, I know how small things like temperature adjustments can translate into medical and physical care. As a Soldier, I know the importance of power generation in times of crisis."