



VA Portland Health Care System Letter to the Editor



VA | Defining
HEALTH CARE | **EXCELLENCE**
in the 21st Century

Release #1115-01

November 5, 2015

VA Portland Health Care System
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VA Portland Health Care System Director's Veterans Day letter Honoring our nation's Veterans

PORTLAND, Ore. — Veterans Day is a day of national remembrance — a special occasion to honor all the men and women, living and dead, who took up arms in defense of our great nation. It is our duty as Americans — not just on Veterans Day, but every day — to remember the sacrifices they've made and to make certain that our commitments to them and to their families are honored.

This year our nation begins the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. This commemoration period serves as an opportunity for a grateful nation to thank and honor the more than 7 million Vietnam Veterans that live among us, those who - upon their return to home - were treated with indifference and even disdain in one of the most painful periods of our history. We have an obligation to not let their service and sacrifices be forgotten. This obligation is especially important to the individuals that have the privilege to serve Veterans at VA.

In his Second Inaugural Address, President Lincoln charged Americans to care for those “who shall have borne the battle,” and for their families and their survivors. Today, more than 150 years later, our commitment to that most noble mission remains vibrant and palpable at VA and I am honored to be a part of it.

To continue improving the care for and the relationship with Veterans, VA is undergoing a radical transformation called MyVA. According to Secretary Bob McDonald, we want services and care to be so excellent for each and every Veteran served that they proudly recommend VA to their closest friends and family and refer to it as “MyVA.” At its core, MyVA is focused on improving the experience for Veterans and the VA employees that serve them every day. Additionally, MyVA seeks to improve the internal business services that support the exceptional clinical care that we provide in a culture centered on continuous improvement. In essence, the MyVA Initiative is intended to transform the VA by putting the Veteran at the center of what the VA does.

To support the MyVA Initiative locally, VAPORHCS is collaborating with a network of Veteran service providers, advocates, and other key community stakeholders to form a Veterans Engagement Board or MyVA Community focused on improving outcomes for Veterans and their families. The board will be chaired by community leaders who will help to drive a shared understanding among stakeholders of the complex challenges that Veterans and transitioning Service Members face and leverage the collective strengths of the community to improve the Veteran experience. I will be supporting the group's efforts as a board member and I am excited about the first meeting scheduled in November 2015.

The MyVA Community effort is just one of the many endeavors included in VAPORHCS's continued Journey of Excellence. The facility's efforts are strategic and supported by six pillars - People, Service, Quality, Safety, Stewardship, and Innovation - which help us to keep what's important to the Veteran and the organization at the forefront of our daily activities. For example, this year we established the first Veterans and Family Advisory Board to increase feedback from our Veterans and stakeholder groups. Additionally, we have monthly meetings with Veterans Service Organizations, quarterly meetings with congressional stakeholders and host quarterly Veterans Town Halls where all are invited to share issues and concerns.

We at VAPORHCS rightfully express our appreciation for the unwavering dedication of our Veterans to America's defense. We have a humbling mission and we are honored and thankful to be able to serve our heroes, recognizing that we could not do this without the dedication of our hardworking staff, one-third of which are also Veterans. Their resolute commitment to our I CARE values: to act with integrity and compassion, advocate for Veterans, to

show respect to all, and to pursue excellence, is a testament to our willingness to improve the delivery of quality care to those who borne the battle. It is our honor to serve those who have served us. Happy Veterans Day.

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The VA Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS) serves more than 90,000 Veterans in Oregon and Southwest Washington. VAPORHCS consists of the main tertiary care medical center located near downtown Portland, Ore., the Vancouver Campus located near downtown Vancouver, Wash., a Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) in downtown Portland, as well as nine community outpatient clinics across Oregon that support our Veterans. These clinics are located in Bend, East Portland, Hillsboro, Warrenton, Newport, Salem, The Dalles, West Linn, and Lincoln City Oregon.



Integrity – Commitment – Advocacy – Respect - Excellence