

Dear Veterans Health Administration Employee:

The news media recently uncovered a serious situation at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington. I am sure you have been affected by stories of neglect, abuse and the consequent overflowing frustrations of our wounded American military heroes that brought their plight so much national focus.

Like many, Disabled American Veterans (DAV), with 1.3 million service-disabled veteran members, was appalled and demanded that the Department of Defense immediately correct these deplorable conditions at its premier medical treatment facility. A Nation at war cannot tolerate bureaucratic delays, substandard housing and less than compassionate treatment of its soldiers and marines who have sacrificed so much while serving their country.

While media reports of the Walter Reed scandal have cast a shadow on military and veterans' medicine, I want to reassure you that DAV is very proud of you and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care system. Problems arise from time to time in any system that provides for the needs of large populations, but, at its root, VA health care is a constant and shining emblem of how to reform a system for excellence. Over the past two or three years we have seen mounting evidence that VA is a source of dependable, safe and efficient health care for veterans. The system provides a wonderful resource for sick and disabled veterans, which in so many ways are unique to our experience. You offer veterans the best quality at the least cost, and the lowest error rates of any health care system to which you might be compared. Your medication safety program, electronic health record and prevention programs are the envy of American medicine. VA serves the Nation's veterans well, while supporting and developing new generations of health care professionals and advancing the standard of care through its renowned biomedical research and development programs.

We, the members of DAV, want you to know that we consider VA to be a national treasure. While we may have experienced a momentary controversy brought about because one military medical treatment facility let down our disabled service members, we hold the Veterans Health Administration--and the work each of you do every day for sick and disabled veterans--in the highest regard. On behalf of DAV, I salute you.

Sincerely,



BRADLEY S. BARTON  
National Commander