

From: VACO Announcement [<mailto:NoReply@va.gov>] **Sent:** Monday, November 10, 2014 11:13 AM **To:** Undisclosed Recipients **Subject:** A Message from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs: MyVA

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

MyVA

In the last few months as your Secretary, I have met and heard from Veterans and family members about how we can better serve Veterans. I have also traveled to VA facilities across the country and have had the extraordinary opportunity to meet with you, the men and women who work on the front lines and behind the scenes to care for and serve Veterans every day. These opportunities have informed my thinking as we work to plan for the future of the Department. Already, more than 2,000 VA employees at 20 facilities serving 1.4 million Veterans have shared their perspectives on how we can improve this Department and have provided insightful and thoughtful feedback about how VA should be organized to better serve Veterans. It is clear that our shared mission is important to you and your colleagues. It is also clear that you share my goal of making VA easier to navigate for Veterans. I am grateful for your contributions and your support in this endeavor.

As we have been considering changes to VA, we have also met with Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. We have used your feedback, and the common themes we heard in all comments, to begin shaping the way forward for VA. Soon, we will begin implementing changes to VA to better structure our organization to meet Veteran needs. Our new alignments may change some of our processes, but our employees remain valued members of the team.

Our shared goals are to ensure that Veterans have a clear understanding of VA and where to go for what they need within any of our facilities; that employees are empowered with the authority, knowledge, and tools they need to solve problems and take action; and that the products and services that we deliver to Veterans are integrated within the organization. The changes we plan to make are as follows:

- Establishing a new **VA-wide customer service organization** to ensure we provide top-level customer service to Veterans. A Chief Customer Service Officer, who reports to the Secretary, will lead this effort. The mission of the new office will be to drive VA culture and practices to understand and respond to the expectations of our Veteran customers.
- Establishing a **single regional framework** that will simplify internal coordination, facilitate partnering, and enhance customer service. This will allow Veterans to more easily navigate VA without having to understand our inner structure.
- Working with our partners to establish a national network of **Community Veteran Advisory Councils** to coordinate better service delivery with local, state, and community partners. Expanded public-private partnerships will help us coordinate Veteran-related issues with local, state, and community partners, as well as VA employees.
- Identifying opportunities for VA to realign its internal business processes into a **shared services** model in which organizations across VA leverage the same support services to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and increase productivity across VA. Right now, we are looking at options used in the private sector to enhance our rapid delivery of services and also at our own business

processes that are suited for shared services.

Please keep in mind that this is a long-term process, and we are just beginning to plan how this will all unfold. As we move forward with these changes, your feedback, ideas, and perspectives will be invaluable. To gather your suggestions, we have launched an intranet Web tool, the *MyVA* Idea House, where employees from across VA can submit ideas online to improve services, streamline processes, and solve issues for Veterans and their families. Employees can also vote on submissions from your colleagues across VA. Sponsors will select ideas and create topic-related groups to encourage collaboration and help make the ideas a reality. The Idea House Web site will officially open for submissions tomorrow on Veterans Day, November 11, 2014. I encourage you to go to vaideahouse.ideascale.com to submit your ideas and proposed solutions to the challenges you are seeing.

I know there are a lot of questions about this effort, and I know that there will be concerns. We do not have all the answers right now, and that is why we are reaching to you for your thoughts. This will be a fair and deliberate process, and we need your help to make sure our decisions are the right ones for Veterans.

As we collect input and work together to design an employee-led, Veteran-centric VA, we have a great opportunity to make significant progress toward our goals in the near term. Thank you for the work you are doing each day to make VA a stronger organization for America's Veterans.

Robert A. McDonald