

Subject: Fwd: MESSEAGE FROM THE DEPUTY SECRETARY
Date: May 18, 2015 at 7:57 PM
To: Benjamin Krause benkrause@disabledveterans.org

[REDACTED] (VHA [REDACTED])
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2015 3:10 PM
To: VHAJAC [REDACTED]
Subject: MESSEAGE FROM THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

Helping Veterans

Recently, an elderly Veteran drove himself to a VA medical center (VAMC) with a broken foot. After parking his car, he called the VAMC to ask for help getting from his car to the emergency room. Instead of sending someone out with a wheelchair, the person taking the call advised the Veteran to call 911, which the Veteran did. The local fire department then responded, helping the Veteran from the parking lot into the hospital.

We can all see now how wrong it was for this Veteran to be referred elsewhere for the little help he needed. I am certain all of us would have freely offered that help had we been there and understood the situation; however, sometimes we get so focused on following what we believe to be policy and procedure, limiting what we can and cannot do, that we lose sight of the Veterans we are committed to serving.

I am asking that we all take this as a learning opportunity—that we all think a little harder about our I-CARE values (Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence) and the customer experience we want every Veteran to have, every time. These core values and the basic principles of doing the right thing for Veterans, taking ownership, and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars should guide our day-to-day decisions. This is the essence of what we mean when we talk about “MyVA.” Leaving Veterans in our parking lot for others to rescue is not who we are, and not who the American people expect us to be.

Let us be good stewards of the public trust and the kind, helpful, sensible, and compassionate human beings Veterans deserve.

Sloan D. Gibson