

From: Carpenter, Donna M on behalf of Kelly, Patrick J.
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2015 2:56 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Message from the Director

Team,

I want to update you on a couple issues being covered by the local media and provide a little more context.

First, there is continued coverage of the issue of initial Compensation and Pension TBI examinations for our MPLS area Veterans. As I stated in my 6 August email on this subject, we did use the wrong type of examiner as has been reported. Once we identified the problem, we acted aggressively, and in coordination with the VBA Regional Office, identified all affected Veterans and took appropriate actions to ensure they get the benefits they're entitled to.

To ensure that we're on the right track, we've reviewed our internal processes and have asked an external reviewer to assist us in making sure we're not missing anything. One of our distinguished MN Congressmen has called for a nationwide review and we fully support this as a means to make sure we're doing everything correctly going forward.

Second, advertising billboards in the area of HWY 62 and Cedar Avenue in Minneapolis are displaying a disparaging message about VA. One billboard is located across the street from a VA office building. Similar billboards have appeared near VA Medical Centers in Florida, Georgia and Illinois. Like all Americans, Veterans have the right of free speech and are welcome to exercise that right even when we don't agree with the message. If you are asked by your family, friends or neighbors about the billboards, assure them that the Minneapolis VA is committed to providing timely, high quality healthcare to our Veterans. Encourage them to visit our VA, talk to Veterans and even volunteer to help us in our sacred mission. Anyone wishing to volunteer here should call 612.725.2050. The billboards have drawn the attention of several news media outlets. As a reminder, in the event that you are contacted by the press for comment about the VA, please refer them to Ralph Heussner, our Public Affairs Officer, at 612.467.3012.

You can all be incredibly proud of the work you're doing. It's an honor to serve with you in caring for our Veterans.

Respectfully,

Patrick J. Kelly, FACHE
Director, Minneapolis VA Health Care System
612.467.2101