



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

December 5, 2022

Dear Veteran,

It is our great responsibility and privilege at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide the best care and services to Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. A key part of that effort is making sure that everyone who enters a VA facility is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Sexual assault and harassment, in any form, have no place at VA or its facilities. Every Veteran who receives treatment or benefits at a VA facility has the right to be treated with dignity and respect in an environment that is safe and free of harassment or sexual assault. Harassment or sexual assault creates an unsafe and unwelcoming environment for everyone. Furthermore, when such conduct is observed by others and not reported, this omission allows, and sometimes encourages, such conduct to continue.

While we never want anyone to experience any harassment or sexual assault at a VA facility, VA stands ready to respond if an incident occurs. VA strongly encourages those who have experienced harassment or sexual assault to report it immediately. We will investigate every report and take appropriate action. We also recognize talking about harassment or sexual assault can be difficult for some people, and VA has resources in place to help you throughout the process. Please note, there is no wrong door for reporting an incident, and VA has resources in place at all facilities to provide support. You can report to whomever you feel most comfortable speaking with about harassment or sexual assault. This includes law enforcement officials and VA designated points of contact.

White Ribbon VA is a national call to action to eliminate sexual harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence across VA. Additionally, every VA Veteran and employee is encouraged to take the White Ribbon VA Pledge to never commit, excuse or stay silent about sexual harassment, sexual assault or domestic violence. To learn more and to take the pledge today, visit www.va.gov/health/harassment-free/. Together, we will ensure that VA remains a trusted and safe environment for all.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that the vast majority of those who enter our facilities are contributing to positive and safe environments. It is important to personally thank each of you for the respect and dignity you continue to show other Veterans, visitors and employees when visiting our facilities. Thank you for respecting one another and for treating every Veteran, visitor and employee with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DMC".

Denis McDonough

Enclosure