

A MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY Leadership Improvements to Cascade Throughout VA

I am pleased to announce that our senior field leaders from across the country joined me in Leesburg, Virginia, for a groundbreaking training session this week. More than 300 participated in “Leaders Developing Leaders” training. The aim was simple — equip leaders across VA with skills so they can improve VA for Veterans and employees. Our field leaders are the “tip of the spear” in any cultural change effort, including the MyVA strategy. Those who attended this session will, in turn, cascade this training to their respective teams. This will lead to improved leadership skills, more effective teams, and better experiences for employees throughout VA.

This approach is one I used at Procter & Gamble with great success. We are making a significant investment in this training because it is critical to everything we do at VA: We can’t hope to improve the Veteran experience if we don’t improve the employee experience. The session was facilitated by Dr. Noel Tichy, professor at the Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. Dr. Tichy is regarded as a global expert in leadership training, cascading strategy, empowering employees, and building organizational capabilities.

The Deputy Secretary and I — along with the Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries — were the first to model the cascading strategy and led the training session. The participants were encouraged to transform their thinking to consider the importance of moving from a “rules-based” to “principles-based” organization. Each leader identified a project they would take on using new ideas, tools, and leadership techniques. In a move to cut through red tape, leaders also identified — and, in many cases, decided to eliminate — numerous unnecessary and overly bureaucratic reports, approval processes, meetings, measurements, and policies.

I am excited about this effort and anticipate that in the months ahead you will be pleased by the leadership improvements you’ll see at VA. I look forward to continuing this training with the next group of leaders.

Thank you for your continued service to VA and America’s Veterans.

Robert A. McDonald

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DUE TO THEIR SPECIALTIES.**