

Disabled Combat Veteran Bullied by Hospital Medical Director in Leeds, MA

Nearly two years have come to pass without any justice being dispensed on the part of the VA

LEEDS, MA, USA, September 18, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When Bill Montanari, a Disabled Vietnam veteran with two Purple Hearts, checked himself into the Leeds, VAMC for treatment of his PTSD back in 2012, he did not expect to be bullied by the Hospital Administrator, Roger Johnson.

While a patient at the Leeds Facility, Mr. Montanari witnessed several issues of serious mismanagement that he was encouraged by his Therapist to represent to the Hospital's Medical Director, which he did.

At the meeting the Director seemed very aloof, despite the seriousness of the issues being represented, which included Veterans in rooms without heat, position vacancies, resulting in services not being provided, nurses dispensing the wrong medications, Dentists being utilized as Hospital Administrators, amongst other things. The Hospital Medical Director, Roger Johnson, didn't seem concerned at all, and responded sarcastically with such statements as this: "You have your teeth 52 weeks a year, why don't you get them taken care of elsewhere?" and eluded to the fact that the Veteran would not be receiving the appropriate Travel Benefit, which should have been established utilizing his address of record on file with the Hospital.

When the Veteran processed out upon discharge, he was given a Travel Voucher authorizing payment from Rhode Island and not from his address of record in Florida. When the Veteran questioned the Travel Clerk, the Clerk replied that this was per Director Johnson's instructions.

The Veteran proceeded to the Office of the Patient Advocate, Judy Blanton. Fortunately, he met a fellow Veteran en route, and asked him to accompany the Veteran to the meeting. At the meeting Mr. Montanari simply asked for assistance in appealing the obvious error in the establishment of his Travel Allowance. Ms. Blanton said, "I could easily assist you in this matter, but I don't work for you, or any other Veteran, I work for the Director, he signs my paycheck."

Mr. Montanari asked the witness to sign a sworn affidavit attesting to what he witnessed at that meeting, to which the witness, Mr. William Purcell, complied.

The Veteran was then discharged from the hospital, and for nearly two years has been appealing

to several agencies within the VA, including the Office of Resolution Management and the Office of the Secretary of the VA and President Obama as well, all to no avail.

The Veteran even reached out to Senator Marco Rubio, who attempted to resolve the issue, because, despite Director Johnson presenting the illusion of cooperation, he was in fact stonewalling the process by providing incomplete, misleading information to the Senator's Aide. Director Johnson even stated, in a letter to Senator Rubio, that the Veteran either "misunderstood what the Patient Advocate said", implying that the Veteran was stupid, or that the Veteran was "misrepresenting what the Patient Advocate said", meaning that the Veteran was lying. What Director Johnson failed to address was the fact that the conversation was witnessed by William Purcell, and that even though Director Johnson had agreed to meet with the witness, he would not allow an appointment to be scheduled, despite three attempts to do so on the part of the Mr. Purcell.

Then came the VA Scandal in Phoenix AZ, and Mr. Montanari picked up the pace in his quest for justice. He appealed to the New England VISN 1, Director Michael Mayo-Smith, who assigned the task to Andrea Kushman, who then assigned the task to Kip Bouymaster of the Leeds facility. Within two days of Mr. Buoymaster reviewing the same evidence in the same file, the appropriate benefit of \$974 was dispensed as opposed to the \$85 offered by Director Johnson, as retaliation for Mr. Montanari's questioning his [Johnson's] mismanagement of the Leeds facility.

This process took nearly two years to resolve, with nothing changing, as it relates to what was in the file at the onset. What took place is a classic case of a High Level VA Administrator, abusing his authority, to deny a veteran benefits and services to which he is rightfully entitled.

Now that the Veteran has received his benefit, the Mayo-Smith Administration expected the Veteran to go away, believing that the issue was all about money. Well, the Veteran didn't go away, and insisted on Director Johnson being investigated, not only by Mayo-Smith, who is Johnson's supervisor, but also by the VA Office of Inspector General, since it would appear that perhaps Director Johnson may be enhancing his Performance Bonus by keeping his Operational Costs down by denying Veteran Services, paying inappropriate Travel benefits amounting to ten cents on the dollar, not fixing heating issues, not utilizing Dentists as Dentists, but rather as Hospital Administrators etc., to say nothing of his [Johnson's] overlooking the allegation of Nurses handing out the wrong medications to patients.

Where are we today? The Fact Finding Task Force appointed by Mayo-Smith has missed their original deadline of August 18, 2014. They were given an additional two weeks, and finally have completed their investigation and submitted their report to Mayo-Smith, who says he still has unanswered questions and needs more time. The Office of Inspector General won't take the Veteran's call, even to add information to the original Complaint. The Office of Special Counsel at the VA will not advise Veterans, but will only process complaints from VA Employees. The Office of the Federal Civil Service Commission isn't interested in the fact that Director Johnson is

retiring under a cloud with the results of several investigations pending.

All the while the Veteran continues his quest for justice, but the "Good Ole Boy" network of Cronyism and Patronage continues at the expense of Veterans across America.

Please contact this Veteran if you have any information that may shed light on this matter or other similar experiences with the Veterans Administration.

William A. Montanari

Disabled Veteran

401 258 1326

[email us here](#)

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