

# [VA Responds to IAVA's 'The Wait We Carry' Data Tool](#)

## *Secretary McDonald solicits feedback in letter to vet participants*

**NEW YORK (April 28, 2015)** – Stating that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can only improve when patients let them know when something is not working, Secretary Bob McDonald today wrote to veterans who participated in The Wait We Carry data tool to solicit their direct feedback. The tool and website, [www.thewaitwecarry.org](http://www.thewaitwecarry.org), was created by Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) with the support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and launched at TED2015 in March. The unique data visualization tool currently captures the personal experiences of 2,025 veterans using VA health care system and those who have submitted disability claims for service-connected injuries.

“Veterans are tired of feeling like they’re not being heard. We created this platform for them to tell their personal stories about their VA experiences,” said IAVA’s CEO and Founder Paul Rieckhoff. “Too often, veterans who rely on the VA for their health care feel like a just a number, rather than a real person who deserves the high-quality service they’ve earned. We are pleased that Secretary McDonald is committed to improving the culture of his agency by instilling a customer-first attitude among staff. We hope veterans will take him up on the offer to contact his customer specialists to help improve their service to our nation’s veterans.”

The letter sent to veterans who participated in IAVA’s The Wait We Carry is below. Veterans of all wars are encouraged to submit their own stories to the website by visiting [www.thewaitwecarry.org](http://www.thewaitwecarry.org) and clicking “Share your experiences.”

Dear Veteran:

Thank you for participating in *The Wait We Carry* and sharing your VA experience. We believe the department can only improve when Veterans like yourself let us know when something isn’t working.

From the feedback you provided IAVA, you indicated that your experience did not meet the highest level of service we strive for everyday. We would like to change that by looking into the specific issues you identified in the survey, and look for ways to make your next experience less stressful.

If you would like for us to follow up with you, please email us at [newmedia@va.gov](mailto:newmedia@va.gov) with the subject line “The Wait We Carry.” Our customer service specialists will connect with you to get the information they need to reach out and address your issues.

Again, thank you for your feedback and your service. We look forward to improving your VA experience.

Sincerely,

Bob McDonald  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs