

*A.D. Heathcock
685 Palisades Dr.
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464*

Howard Metcalf, Director
Division of Veterans' Affairs
1205 Pendleton St., Ste. 463
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Complaint

On March 10, 2015 at 10:30 I reported to the Division of Veterans' Affairs Field Office at the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center for the purpose of filing a request for a service related disability. I signed-in as directed by a notice on the table outside the office, and then waited in a designated waiting area. There were 4 others in the waiting area at the time. At 11:03 a woman called one of the people in the room, to come to her office. At 11:35 I checked the sign-in book and there were still 3 people ahead of me, so I gave up and drove back home. As I was leaving I was able to speak briefly with the person in the office, Shelby Garrett, and asked her if an appointment for a future time was a possibility.

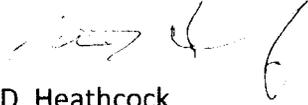
Ms. Garrett said that an appointment system had been tried, but abandoned because it caused her to work late every night. She also said that her immediate supervisor was well aware of the problem caused by a walk-in situation, and she gave me your name and contact information.

The problem seems to be a lack of time to arrange and keep appointments per time allotted. This can be alleviated by either hiring more staff (volunteers?) or hiring more efficient workers. Since additional paid staff is probably not an option, I would suggest that more efficient personnel might help. Please consider the following suggestions.

- 1) What is the standard measure of time required to submit claims or deal with related problems? Maybe a change of personnel is necessary, if some employees are just not getting the job done. I am in no position to judge Ms. Garrett's performance, but you are, and she could be a jewel or a loser, I simply don't know.
- 2) One thing that you can require is better interaction between your employees and their clients. When Ms. Garrett entered the waiting room she only commented on a TV show that was being shown. What she could have said was: " My name is Shelby Garrett, Supervisor of the SC Veterans' Affairs field Office, is everyone here in the right place? I'm backed up more than usual today so it could be several hours before I get to see you. If you like, you can check the sign-in book and estimate about --- minutes per

appointment. Thanks for your patience." This costs nothing. Indefinite waiting time, as in a traffic jam, is the worst kind.

Please note that Ms. Garrett was polite at all times, but there has to be a better way. To me, the answer seems clear enough.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.D. Heathcock', with a stylized flourish at the end.

A.D. Heathcock

Tel: 843-881-4113

cc: Gov. Nicky Haley