

## **Fargo VA Hospital Rated Number 1**

Announced in July, the Fargo VA Health Care System is number one in the country for patient experience. The Department of Veterans Affairs gave the Fargo system the high honor for performing well in several categories compared to more than 150 other veteran's affairs hospitals around the country. Leadership at the hospital said it was in an honor, but more importantly, it meant their patients are getting the quality care they deserve. Director Jeff Rondeau spoke of a patient who sent them a letter, saying they helped him get out of homelessness. "He wrote to talk about his social worker who he referred to as his savior. Now he's got a job, he's got a stable place to live, he's getting V.A. benefits and he's getting to see his kids," Rondeau said.

My experience over the past month has been excellent. I requested a non-emergency appointment in July and was scheduled for 4 August, a couple weeks later. I arrived the required 15 minutes early and was treated very well by everyone from the person at the front door who took my temperature to the doctor I saw on my visit. The only thing I could complain about was about the number of reminders I received; a US Mail letter, an email, an automated phone call and a text message. I think one or two would have been enough.

Because of the good experience, I decided to move from the Tucson, Arizona VA to the Fargo VA. The only week I missed writing this column over the past nearly five years was the day and night I spent in the Tucson VA hospital. I made one phone call and had my records transferred from Tucson to Fargo, got my annual check-up scheduled for September with a doctor and got a renewal for my prescription medicines. I am pleased.

On a personal note, Sweetie and I spent some time with relatives in Thief River Falls, MN and learned some very interesting things. My oldest brother, Bob was in the US Army from 1952 until 1954. He served as a radio operator in Germany which I knew. What I did not know was that Bob kept a box full of stuff from his tour including his training graduation, the weekly newsletter he received on board ship going to Europe and his orders going and returning. He apparently went on several tours while in Germany and even kept the tour flyer and his ticket. I will be sorting the material, scanning the documents and producing a story of Bob's service to our country. Bob's widow has his funeral flag, but I got my brother Pete's flag and will be putting it in a display box soon. Pete never married and has no children, so I have the flag. tary.