

voices))) of integrity



Dr. Apar Ganti

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Hi. This is Dr. Apar Ganti. I am a medical oncologist at the Omaha VA. And my job is to take care of Veterans who have cancer.

One of the common things that we do is provide chemotherapy to these patients with cancer. And I think it becomes very important to tell them what exactly to expect and how they're going to feel, because chemotherapy has a lot of side effects. And if we're not honest about them, then they might feel that this may be too easy or too difficult. And in either condition, their experience with chemotherapy will not be optimal, and as a result they may stop therapy early, which could potentially result in their life expectancy being reduced.

What we have done is we've tried to foster a culture where we put the Veterans and their families first. Let's say for example a Veteran has to come in from a distance. And living in Omaha here, we often see folks drive in a hundred miles each way to see us. And so we try to assess what their needs will be, what their requirements would be, focusing on the Veterans' and their families' comfort. And if that involves bending ourselves a bit backwards, so be it. And we try to get optimal care to Veterans as much as possible within the time span that they're actually there,

rather than having to have them make multiple trips.

I would suggest that we be honest and transparent in our workings. If there is a problem, be up front and highlight the problem, and own up to it and take steps to fix it. Because the worst thing that we can do is to try to hide a problem in the hope that it will go away or no one will notice. Someone will always notice eventually. Even if no one else notices, I think you as an individual will know that there is a problem and you are not being honest to yourself and to others by trying to hide that problem or trying to evade that problem.

You've got to realize that these are folks who have volunteered to give their lives for the country. So it is our responsibility to take care of them. And the same thing for the American taxpayers. They are giving hard-earned money in order to support the troops and the Veterans who have served them.

It is important for us to make sure that we are good stewards of the American taxpayers' money. And at the same time perform the role that has been entrusted upon us, namely to take care of Veterans .