“It’s my job to make sure we do the right thing for the Veteran.”

My name is Wayne Vlosich. I’m the medical center director in Columbia, Missouri, and I am responsible for all mid-Missouri Veterans, for both running the main hospital and the nine community-based outpatient clinics we have.

My role within VHA is to ensure that Veterans receive the highest quality of health care in a timely manner, while basically placing Veterans at the center of everything that we do.

I believe that personal integrity is a core value in delivering ethical health care, and it’s my job to make sure we do the right thing for the Veteran, regardless of the situation.

I believe that if I make an honest and moral decision, then I know that I am doing the most for the Veteran and their family. And that is why it’s so important, is because integrity—doing what’s honest and having a moral compass—if we do that, then everything will fall into place, and we’re doing the absolute best we can for the Veterans and their families.

I think that fostering a culture of integrity enhances the quality of health care in an efficient and effective manner. It leads an organization to be a champion for the Veteran, in all aspects of their health care, and basically it encourages participation in the health care delivery process at all levels.

I guess the advice I would provide is to speak up. And speaking up is a way that I encourage others to highlight their integrity.

You know I meet with different work units every day, and I encourage them to tell me what they’re doing well, and also how we can improve.

I think fostering that dialogue, and encouraging others to listen to other’s opinions that they might not agree with, draws out the best in people in what we can do, and then also fosters that conversation.

That’s the core of what a leader does—they set the example, they lead by example, they do what they say they’re going to do, they keep their word, and when there are issues across the organization, they address those issues so that the employees know that you’re doing the absolute right thing, and you’re doing it in what’s in the best interests of not only the employees, but the Veteran.