I am nominating Mr. Steven Henry for the Clifford W. Beers award for his consistent efforts to improve Mental Health care for the veteran community.

Mr. Henry has been receiving care for his Mental Illness since 2009 from the Department of Veterans Affairs and the private sector. In 2014 Mr. Henry had planned on committing suicide but his plan was thwarted by a co-worker who was attentive enough to identify the warning signals of his darkening depression. Soon afterwards he entered into an outpatient treatment program through Sheppard Pratt. The first few days were very difficult and he even tried to commit suicide but was unsuccessful. Soon after his suicide attempt he had a moment of clarity where he discovered he was not alone, that his mental illness did not define him and suicide was a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

After being discharged from Sheppard Pratt Mr. Henry realized his struggle was just beginning; not just with his illness, but from the fallout with his employer. He had hopes of being a voice of hope by telling his story to his co-workers, hopefully reaching others that were too afraid to ask for help, but soon found that by doing so he was retaliated against. This did not stop him though, he continued to advocate and tell his story of his struggle and recovery.

To date, Mr. Henry has shared his story of his struggle and his recovery. He realizes how important it is to speak with other people who currently suffer from Mental Illness and let them know its ok to ask for help; he is not afraid of his mental illness any longer.

Currently Mr. Henry is serving as a Legislative Director for Paralyzed Veterans of America where he lobbies Congressional leadership to increase benefits for those who have served in the United States armed forces.

He’s been nominated and currently serves on the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Veteran Service Organizations Advisory Committee on Suicide Prevention and represents Paralyzed Veterans of America before committees and meetings addressing suicide prevention. He is a respected member of the VSO community, maintaining a high level of respect among his peers.

I sincerely believe Mr. Henry’s actions are best represented by the Clifford W. Beers award.