



Northwest Chapter

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NORTHWEST OUTPOST

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Spring has sprung on Puget Sound



Senior National Service Officer
Michael Killen

Henry M. Jackson Federal Bldg.
915 Second Avenue
Room 1054
Seattle, WA 98174
206-341-8210
800-795-3576
206-223-4502 (fax)

NWPVA Officers

President-Matthew Mickunas
Vice President-Robert Clinton
Acting Secretary-Robert Clinton
Treasurer-Aaron Hastings
National Director-Michael Partridge

NWPVA Board of Directors

Russ Norris, Joe Sapienza,
Terry Chenoweth,
Michael Partridge, Andrew Bechtle,
Robert Clinton, Fred Margiotta,
Thomas Bungert, & George Vermef
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Sports Director-Russ Norris
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Thomas Bungert
Parliamentarian-Robert Clinton
Legislative & Government Relations
Director-Mike Partridge
Veterans Home Liaison & VAAC-
Matthew Mickunas
Volunteer Coordinator-Robert Clinton
Outpost Editor-Lisa Lawrence

Staff

Executive Director-Brent King
Office Manager-Lisa Lawrence

Our Mission

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1946, has developed a unique expertise on a wide variety of issues involving the special needs of our members-veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

PVA will use that expertise to be the leading advocate for:

- Quality health care for our members,
- Research and education addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction,
- Benefits available as a result of our members' military service,
- Civil rights and opportunities which maximize the independence of our members.

To enable PVA to continue to honor this commitment, we must recruit and retain members who have the experience, energy, dedication, and passion necessary to manage the organization and ensure adequate resources to sustain the programs essential for PVA to achieve its mission.

The Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA) a member chapter of **Paralyzed Veterans of America** accomplishes it's mission by coordinated efforts through programs that:

- Provide opportunities for health promotion, recreation, employment, sports and recreation, service and camaraderie for paralyzed veterans;
- Elevate society's information level about the attitudinal, physical and legal barriers that confront persons with disabilities in order to influence the removal of those barriers;
- Advocate for and monitor the delivery of high quality and appropriate health care benefits and service;
- Cooperate with and seek the support of other groups and individuals that share NWPVA's objective;
- Educate the public with the current and ongoing needs and current and past contributions of America's veterans.

Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

616 SW 152nd Street, Suite B

Burien, WA 98166

206-241-1843

1-800-336-9782

Fax: 206-433-0749

E-mail: pvachnw@mindspring.com

Web site: www.nwpva.org

Matthew Mickunas About Your Northwest PVA Chapter

“What wouldn't you do for an organization that gave you back your dignity?”



In collaboration with the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) national office and Northwest PVA Chapter kicked off PVA Awareness Month, April, – a 30-day celebration designed to raise awareness of not only America's Veterans living with spinal cord injury or disease (SCI/D) and all people with disabilities, but also the people, programs, and services that exist to help make their lives easier. As part of the festivities, PVA will share inspirational stories, release its latest video, “Heroes,” and invite the public to follow along online for an up-close, virtual look inside its operations, via a series of

Instagram Takeovers featuring its most prized departments. like Sports & Recreation, Veterans Career Program, Research & Education, Medical Services and Architecture, and more. “PVA Awareness Month is not about PVA,” said [Matthew Mickunas, Northwest PVA President]. “It's about helping those who sacrificed their lives for us, our Nation's Veterans, and making their lives better. Every day the Northwest Chapter strives to deliver on its promise of empowering our brave men and women to regain what they fought for, their freedom and independence. We won't stop until every Veteran gets what they earned, and we encourage the public to join us in this effort during PVA Awareness Month and beyond.”

Every year more than 12,000 people in the United States, including Veterans, sustain a spinal cord injury (SCI). Such injuries change a person's life in an instant and can have life-changing consequences, including loss of motor skills and/or sensory function. As the nation's only nonprofit organization dedicated solely to helping Veterans with SCI/D, and diseases, like MS and ALS, as well as all people with disabilities, PVA Nationally & your Northwest PVA is there. With help from its partners, generous supporters, and staff – to include physicians, nurses, architects, lawyers, legislative experts, and 33 Chapters across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, PVA Nationally & your Northwest PVA helps Veterans and their families by securing benefits; ensuring quality health care; helping them find meaningful careers; empowering them through sports and recreation; fighting for their rights; and searching for a cure for SCI/D.

Dating back to its inception, PVA Awareness Month started as just a week-long observance but, following requests from its Members, and Chapters, to include your Northwest Chapter, was extended to a month to recognize all the organization's programs and achievements. Over nearly 75 years, the organization has celebrated PVA Awareness Month as a means of showcasing how far it has come in its fight to help paralyzed Veterans and all people with disabilities, as well as how much further we have left to go to help them regain what they fought for: their freedom and independence. To learn more about our PVA Awareness Month go to www.pva.org/pam , or visit your chapters website at www.nwppva.org .





PVA's
"Veterans Career Program"
formerly referred to as
"Paving Access for Veterans
Employment"
or PAVE

As Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) approaches its 75th year of advocating for and supporting veterans with spinal cord injuries and diseases, such as MS and ALS, as well as all people with disabilities, today the organization unveiled an anniversary logo and new name of their successful employment program. PVA's Veterans Career Program, formerly referred to as Paving Access for Veterans Employment or PAVE, will continue offering high-touch, one-on-one support to members of the veteran community, with a focus on those with catastrophic injuries or other barriers, to help them find meaningful employment, education, and volunteer opportunities.

The update comes as PVA reveals its 75th anniversary logo, featuring its year of establishment, patriotic colors, a service member in a wheelchair, and five stars that reflect each branch of the armed forces the organization has served since its inception. Both the logo and newly renamed career program are consistent with PVA's ongoing efforts to add more clarity and uniformity to its programming. In May, PVA will officially kick off its 75th anniversary celebration with the launch of a new public awareness campaign. As the months unfold, more details about the campaign will be unveiled.

"There is no better time than today to celebrate our rich history and formally announce the new name of our employment program," said David Zurfluh, PVA national president. "Year after year, PVA strives to better serve our nation's veterans, their families and caregivers by helping them live more independently and easing the challenges of everyday life. Together, with our partners and supporters, we are making a difference and improving lives through invaluable programs, like our Veterans Career Program. While the name may be different, rest assured, the quality, services and assistance it provides remain untouched. As we enter our 75th year, we look forward to continuing to be a partner for life through our Veterans Career Program."

The veteran's employment program was started in 2007 to ensure PVA members, veterans with catastrophic disabilities, their spouses and caregivers have access to meaningful employment, educational and volunteer opportunities. The program consists of a team of vocational rehabilitation counselors and employment analysts that support veterans, caregivers and military spouses at every stage of their career, from resume writing and interviewing to profile building and networking. These experts also go a step further, helping individuals evaluate transferable skills, requesting workplace accommodations, finding positions that build on experience and interests, and helping to build the confidence veterans need to be successful in their positions. Since its launch, the program has guided nearly 5,000 members of the veteran community to meaningful careers, many of whom were not eligible for other programs.

The program extended its reach with the launch of PVA Veterans Career Live, (formerly known as PAVE Connect), an online engagement initiative for veterans with disabilities or other barriers that prevent them from fully participating in traditional hiring events. Through a series of informal virtual sessions, program participants learn directly from career experts, and network with employers and industry experts. To learn more visit [PVA.org/VeteransCareerProgram](https://www.pva.org/VeteransCareerProgram).

Robert Clinton Lets Develop Unit Cohesion



As your Vice President, over the last several weeks I have been searching for ways to increase member, and especially Board member, involvement in our Association, and borrowing a military term, develop unit cohesion. Even before COVID 19 most of our interaction was during the monthly Board of Director Directors Meeting, Annual Picnic, Banquet, Wheelchair Games, etc., but none of these venues really provided the opportunity for us to find out much about how we came to join the military and ultimately join PVA. I believe this helps us all understand each other better develop comradery and build a stronger team.

Using myself as an example: I joined the Air Force in the early 70s. Stationed in Japan I began to feel some mysterious tingling in my fingers and around my waist. I saw a young AF doctor who gave me a shot of vitamin B and said I should see a neurologist. The symptoms went away, so I never went back. Fast forward to 1992, after having been a tugboat captain sailing up and down the west coast, I was promoted to management and started running at lunch and began tripping and falling, and was diagnosed with MS. In 1995 I moved to Washington DC to work for a trade association advocating for increased safety in the U.S. Tug and Barge industry. Fast forward again to 2012, I took a job as safety manager for a tug company in the area. Saw a new MS doctor here who had worked for the VA, he suggested that I get a copy of my AF medical record. In the record I found that young AF doctor had written that he suspected I had MS! Next stop PVA, VSO Duane Hughes walked me through all the paperwork, and in 2015, three months before I retired, I received the award letter granting me 100 % service connected disability, a God send for which I am forever grateful.

I will be reaching out to you all to share similar short stories you are comfortable with in future months so we can all know each other better.

Other items for future consideration that came up in my conversations with members were security concerns, the need **not** to share any member personal information in the *Outpost*, the suggestion for a series of articles on disabled travel, accessible trails, and picnic areas.

Volunteer Coordinator' Column

At our last Board meeting I was asked what happens to the Volunteer hours we submit to National every month, so I reached out to Christi Hillman, Associate Director, Membership & Volunteer Program. Christi was great, she sent me lots of details on the program which I have included below.

Dwain Taylor Award for Voluntary Service

- Each year, PVA recognizes those individuals who have volunteered the highest number of hours to chapter programs.
- Awards are presented in two categories: Member Volunteer and Non-Member Volunteer.
- The volunteer, in each category, with the highest number of hours during the preceding year will be presented with a plaque at the Annual Convention.
- The nine runners-up, in each category will receive a PVA certificate of appreciation. All individuals who have recorded 100 hours or more will receive a letter from the President of PVA thanking them for their contribution.

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- In addition, lapel pins will be presented to all volunteers when they have accumulated 500, 1,000, and 2,500 volunteer hours. Volunteers will also receive recognition plaques at each 5,000 hour threshold.

Annual Chapter Volunteer Service Award

- PVA recognizes the chapter with the highest total cumulative per-capita volunteer hours reported for the preceding fiscal year.
- Only those chapters that have submitted all twelve (12) months of Volunteer Program Reports for the given fiscal year (including any required Time Sheets) will be eligible for consideration.
- The award shall consist of a plaque and be presented at the Annual Convention.

‘Speedy’: The Story About A Little Flying Man

The little man in the flying wheelchair, who use to adorn PVAs front page and elsewhere regularly, has become, through the irresistible force of his personality, a national emblem for the PVA. As Editor John Price has commented, "the little guy sure captures your imagination." We thought you might be interested in the origin and story of the pipe-smoking lad. He was born in the latter part of 1946 at the Birmingham V.A. hospital in Van Nuys, California, the first home of the California PVA. Wilbur Hyde, who was the Chapter's Secretary at the time, asked an artist friend of his to have a suitable stationery emblem drawn. The artist complied with two or three different sketches. From the sketches submitted, the high-flying man was selected by California's PVA Board of Directors. It is not known and we haven't been able to find out because of the lost contracts, whether Wilbur's friend made the sketch (Wilbur thinks probably not) or one of the employees in the studio.

California PVA immediately put the emblem on its stationery and lower left corner of envelopes, and later on the chapter's automobile decals. Though the years, we have received many wonderful comments about the devil-may-care, get-the-hell-out-of-my-way fellow. Some people may feel that the little man's attitude is too flamboyant to be a national emblem for paraplegics. We cordially do not agree. Leave us not become too pompous about this business of paraplegia. "There is a good deal of worthwhile philosophy to be observed in the little man if one will take the time to study him carefully. First, he is happy. He is not sitting around and crying the blues about being in a wheelchair. Second, he's got places to go and he's in a hurry. You better get out of this guy's way or he'll run right over you. Third, and most important, you don't feel sorry for him. On the contrary — you can't help admiring his spunk. He's symbolic of happiness, energy, drive, admiration and guts, and those are respected qualities in the paraplegic way of life."

...The Foundation Editor.



*Paralyzed Veterans
of America*

"Due to federal regulations, the pipe and the smoke trail that leads behind Speedy has been removed and banned from all public views."

Brent King

North Idaho Fish and Game Accessible Hunting Blinds



The NWPVA has donated two specially adapted Fox Trailers to the North Idaho Fish and Game Department for Disabled Veterans to hunt out of this coming Fall. There's a few more items and donations coming top off the trailers to be fully finished.

The trailers have fold down ramps with four pop up windows at the proper height for wheel-chair users to hunt with a rifle for deer, elk and turkey in North Idaho on each unit. A wall will be constructed four feet deep in the back of each trailer with a three-foot-wide doors. This will make it easy to enter/exit and leave the ramp down along with being able to heat the interior with some Little Buddy Heaters. Lowes is donating a flat black epoxy paint to protect the interior wood sheeting. We have a few more donors working on some items to utilize for accessibility.

There are two land owners wanting Disabled Veteran hunters to thin the deer on their land near Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint, Idaho. We will strive to build a program with North Idaho Fish and Game to have a successful organized hunting program.

Watch for future articles on the progress of the blinds and news on how the program development program advances.



VA Research & Development

Article #4 {Animals in Research at the VA}

Foreword: Dr. William A. Banks is currently the Associate Chief of Staff for Research and Development (R&D) at the Veteran Administration (VA) Medical Center (VAMC). He, like many of his colleagues in VA's R&D, work closely with their counterparts at universities throughout the country. Their objective is to assist disabled, spinal cord injured/diseased (SCID) veterans regain normal daily activities as much as possible.

Consequently, we all need to broaden our knowledge of these programs to help our injured brothers and sisters. Especially through the eyes and God-given skills of our doctors, nurses, and medical staff. We extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Banks for arranging the submission of previous and subsequent R&D articles to the Northwest Outlook.

Weldon Lee

Animals in Research at the VA

VA research is unique in focusing on health issues that affect Veterans. VA research played a major role in development and testing of cardiac pacemakers, dialysis, and even the nicotine patch. For research to improve medical treatments for humans, animals often serve as models, for example in discovery and testing of insulin to treat diabetes, development of most modern drugs, and the creation of most vaccines including the new immunizations for COVID19.

Many people are concerned about animals in research, wondering about their welfare and treatment. The VA allows research with animals only if scientifically necessary, and only with the oversight of a specific committee concerned with the animals' welfare. Anyone privileged to undertake an animal study at the VA must adhere to a set of strict national, local, and VA-specific regulations. VA animal facilities must maintain accreditation from an independent outside organization, in the same way VA hospitals must be accredited.

The animal care oversight committee must include a licensed veterinarian with specialty training in laboratory animal medicine, as well as a researcher, a person who has no affiliation with the VA (called a community member), and a person with no scientific research background, for example a librarian or member of the clergy (called a non-scientific member). The community and non-scientific members play key roles to assure that each researcher's justification for needing animals is compelling and is explained in readily understood terms. No animal research may proceed without approval from this committee, which watches over the training of researchers, the program of animal care, the research work, and the animals' welfare.

Over 99% of animals needed in VA research are mice and rats. In fact, these rodents are the only animals housed at the VA Puget Sound in Seattle. Mice and rats are bred specifically for research use, with known gene pedigrees and carefully monitored health status. You may think humans don't have a lot in common with

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rodents, but these miniature mammals allow us to understand a variety of disease processes and give us a look into promising new treatments before they are tried in humans.

Discoveries build upon each other, guiding us to figure out biological puzzles. To list just a few of the research projects at the VA Puget Sound, rodent models are helping us to understand: why some prostate tumors are resistant to treatment; why insulin producing cells become unresponsive in diabetes; what conditions lead to brain cell damage in Alzheimer's Disease; the physical and chemical changes in the brain from sustaining repeated mild traumatic brain injury by being near the detonation of explosive devices. All these conditions greatly affect the Veteran population.

A common concern is the need for other species as research subjects, such as dogs. Dogs are rarely research models, only a fraction of a percent of animals needed nationally in VA as research subjects, but their contributions are important. Dogs are only selected for research when their size and physiology make them the best model. For example, recently the VA needed dogs to develop an electronic stimulator that is helping people with spinal cord injuries to cough. Individuals who lack the ability to cough are subject to frequent and potentially fatal lung infections. Dogs were of the right size and anatomy to test the stimulator. Dog hearts are also excellent models of the human heart, and studies with dogs have helped develop treatments for conditions like atrial fibrillation and heart failure. The VA is currently conducting a study as part of a Congressional mandate to establish scientific evidence whether service dogs reliably reduce PTSD symptoms in Veterans.

You can read more about animals at the VA, and watch a video of a paralyzed Veteran whose condition has been helped by the cough stimulator developed with the help of dogs at the VA. Check out VA animal research at [WWW.research.va.gov/programs/animal research/](http://WWW.research.va.gov/programs/animal%20research/).

Cynthia Pekow, DVM
Veterinary Medical Officer
VA Puget Sound





Washington Update

Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.

Written and produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America - Government Relations Department

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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN SIGNED INTO LAW

President Biden wasted no time signing the American Rescue Plan which provides a third round of stimulus checks for many Americans and allocates additional funding for COVID-19 vaccine distribution, state and local governments, small businesses, and anti-poverty programs. As we reported in the previous Washington Update, VA is receiving a significant infusion of cash from the \$1.9 trillion measure. Much of the \$17 billion slated for VA goes directly toward the care of veterans. This includes covering more expensive care that veterans may need after a year of enduring the pandemic and addressing the coming surge of Compensation and Pension Exams and elective procedures that were put on hold over the past year. The remaining funding will go toward things like VA's supply chain modernization efforts, supporting state veteran homes, providing retraining assistance to veterans who became unemployed because of the pandemic, and waiving copayments for veterans who sought VA medical care over the past year.

The massive legislation also included several provisions representing significant victories for the disability community. After a year-

long effort by advocates, Congress increased federal Medicaid matching funds by 10 percent to support home and community-based services for one year beginning April 1, 2021. Those additional funds are on top of the 6.2 percentage point increase in the federal share for the Medicaid program provided in earlier COVID packages and will pay for an array of services designed to keep people out of institutions. Special education programs received \$3 billion in enhanced support and families with adult dependents, who had been excluded from previous COVID relief bills, will finally receive economic impact payments for those individuals.

The bill also significantly expands the subsidies in the ACA Marketplaces to cover more middle-class families. Specifically, it removes the current cap that makes any family with income above 400 percent of the poverty level ineligible for any subsidies. It also provides that individuals below 150 percent of the poverty level pay no premiums at all compared to 4 percent of their income currently.

In addition, the bill provides a new incentive for the 12 states that have not expanded Medicaid to do so by temporarily increasing the base federal match by five

percentage points for two years for any state that newly expands its program. If all 12 remaining states expanded Medicaid, more than 2 million uninsured people would gain access to Medicaid.

The bill also extends federal unemployment compensation benefits of \$300 per week through September 6, 2021, and exempts from income taxes the first \$10,200 of unemployment benefits received in 2020. Additionally, it contains a tax rebate of \$1,400 for individuals with incomes of \$75,000 or less, increased by \$1,400 for each dependent. It would expand eligibility and increase the maximum earned income tax credit (EITC) for childless adults and increase the child tax credit (CTC) to \$3,000 per child (with a more generous \$3,600 credit for children under the age of 6). Furthermore, it expands and extends through September 2021 paid sick and family leave tax credits for employers and provides for full federal subsidies of individual COBRA premiums for six months for those who lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

The law also included significant increases in housing and nutrition assistance and support for low income energy assistance programs.

ANNUAL DISABILITY STATISTICS COMPENDIUM RELEASED

In a virtual presentation over several days in mid-February, the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) released its annual compendium of disability statistics and related reports. The Compendium gathers the most recent national statistics on people with disabilities from various federal programs and agencies and provides current statistics and time trends related to the prevalence of disabilities as well as key indicators on employment, health, community living, and other outcomes of importance in monitoring the well-being of individuals with disabilities.

Accompanying the Compendium is an Annual Report that focuses on national trends from year to year. Findings in the 2020 report cover the period 2018 to 2019. Among the statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS) highlighted was an increase in the size of the U.S. population with disabilities from 13.1 percent in 2018 to 13.2 percent in 2019. In raw

numbers, that meant that, of the 327,011,000 people in the U.S. in 2019, 43,227,000 identified as people with disabilities. In 2019, the employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities was 38.9 percent compared to 78.6 percent for those without disabilities, which created an employment gap of 39.8 percent. The employment gap in 2018 had been 40.3 percent. Data also reflected an increase in the “disablement index” which researchers describe as the degree to which the environment impacts the ability of individuals with disabilities to interact with their community. State reports provide county level data on prevalence of people with disabilities, employment rates for people with disabilities, and numbers and percentages of those with disabilities living in poverty.

Using data from the ACS and Veterans Benefits Administration, a chapter on veterans with disabilities presented tables showing that, in 2019, 1,698,714 individuals ages 18 and over living in the community reported having a military service-connected disability

rating of 70 percent or more. Of the veterans with disabilities ages 18-64 years living in the community, 247,410 individuals lived in poverty—a poverty rate of 15.2 percent. A table showing the prevalence rate of veterans with disabilities among state populations indicated that Minnesota had the lowest prevalence rate (13.3 percent) while Arkansas had the highest prevalence rate (27.5 percent).

The Compendium, Annual Report, and state reports can be found at <http://disabilitycompendium.org>. The virtual release featured presentations from the Census Bureau, the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy and other federal agencies as well as focused workshops on the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities and social inequities affecting African Americans with disabilities. The archived event can be found at <http://disabilitycompendium.org/event>.



NATIONAL PRESIDENT EXPLAINS PVA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES TO CONGRESS

On March 4, PVA National President David Zurfluh testified before a Joint Session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs about PVA's 2021 legislative policy priorities. In his written and oral testimonies, President Zurfluh spoke of the importance of preserving VA's SCI/D System of Care, increasing access to specialized long-term care, accelerating the implementation of VA's Caregiver Program, increasing VA transportation assistance to SCI/D veterans, improving access to IVF services, and enhancing accessibility and types of care for women veterans. To view the entire hearing, go to <https://www.veteran.senate.gov/hearings/vso-legislative-presentations-2> of 3. If you want to observe just the PVA portions, his oral statement begins at 2:12:33 with additional interactions with members of Congress during the Q&A sessions at the 2:42:33, 3:00:50, 3:11:36, 3:16:30, and 3:19:10 marks. Also, you can read his full written statement at [https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/pva testimony 03.04.21.pdf](https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/pva%20testimony%2003.04.21.pdf)

VA ASSET AND INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS

In response to the VA MISSION Act of 2018, VA is hosting public virtual listening sessions that will run from March through June 2021. VA wants to hear from veterans on how to design a health care system of the future and grow services for veterans in a way that reinforces VA's role as a leader in the U.S. health care system.

- During the listening session, VA is interested in hearing from veterans on the following topics:
- How they want care to be delivered in the future
- Their perception of the quality of health care at VA and through VA's community network
- Their ability to get care at VA and within VA's community network
- Their satisfaction with the condition and location of VA's facilities
- VA's role in research, education, and emergency preparedness

The feedback will be used to develop the recommendations VA submits to the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission in January 2022. The AIR Commission will also conduct public hearings as part of their review of VA's recommendations before submitting its recommendations to the President and Congress for review and approval in 2023.

To register for an event in your region, click go to <https://www.va.gov/healthpolicyplanning/listening.asp>. A session will also be hosted in Spanish. Once a date and time have been confirmed, the session details will be announced on registration site.

Next Medical Challenge: Catching Up on Millions of Missed Ones

Veterans Affairs officials still have millions of coronavirus vaccines to distribute in coming months, but they are already warily eyeing the next massive medical challenge to follow: making up millions of medical appointments for veterans who have put off routine and specialty care because of virus concerns. “We’ve had massive amounts of health care deferred,” said acting VA Under Secretary for Health Richard Stone in an interview with Military Times on 3 MAR. “We’re down almost 12,000 surgeries a month from before the pandemic. And have to be able to look after those who need us when they come back.”

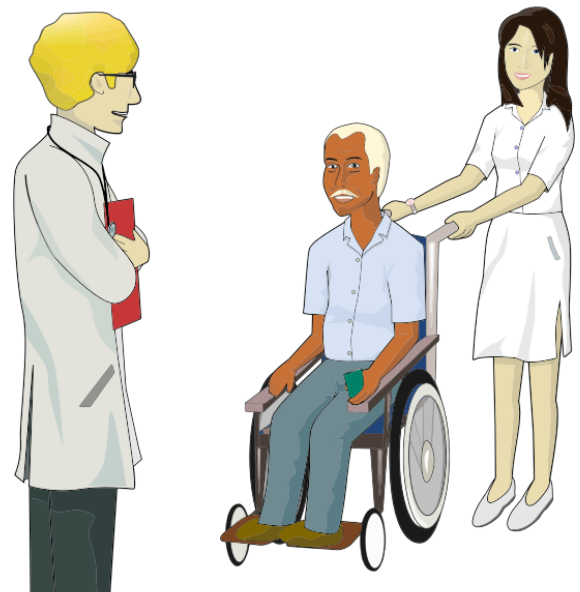
Federal medical experts have estimated that as many as 41 percent of Americans have deferred regular check-ups or non-emergency care visits since last spring, when public officials ordered business closures and stay-at-home orders in an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. VA officials said that they have made up some of those lost appointments through telehealth. In a roundtable with reporters this week, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said that the number of online appointments has increased almost 20-fold in the last year, from 2,500 a day last March to 45,000 a day this month. “But we’re still looking at delayed or deferred care of more than 19 million appointments,” he said. “And some of that delayed care is going to be more costly than it has been in the past.”

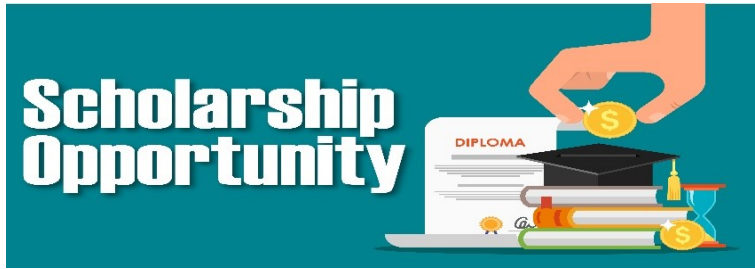
Department leaders are highlighting those new expenses as part of their campaign for President Joe Biden’s coronavirus relief package, under debate on Capitol Hill. The \$1.9 trillion plan includes about \$15 billion in new VA spending, money that some conservatives have argued could be deferred until next fiscal year, and considered in the normal budgeting process. Secretary McDonough dismissed that assessment. “I wish we had the ability to just let this be an issue out over the horizon,” he said. “But with telehealth, we need additional information technology investments now to respond to the demand, including more hardware and software for vets. And we don’t know exactly when all those other [in-person] appointments will come back.”

Stone said medical officials are already preparing for the flood of rescheduled appointments. At the height of the pandemic, about 6,000 workers a day were unable to work because of contract tracing or personal illness. That number is down to around 1,000 a day now, effectively giving VA an influx of extra workers to handle rising patient demands. He said that as veterans receive vaccines, they are also being informed of services that have reopened (to make up for missed medical appointments) and of other resources available to them. That’s particularly

important for individuals who may be facing new mental health issues from the stress and isolation of the pandemic. “This isn’t something that will just be over,” he said. “We recognize that we’re going to be dealing with the effects of this pandemic probably for the next few years.”

The vaccine effort shouldn’t take nearly as long. In the first few weeks of vaccine distribution, VA was administering about 104,000 doses a week. Now they’re up to about 194,000 each week, Stone said, with the capability of going even higher. “When vaccines are available from our federal partners, we’re at the front of the line asking for more,” he said. “They’re seeing that we can get it into people’s arms quickly, so that has helped us get more.” Nearly 10,600 VA patients have died from coronavirus complications in the last year. Nationwide, nearly 520,000 Americans have died





Paralyzed Veterans of America is now accepting applications for its scholarship program. Applications are being accepted through May 15, 2021.

Qualified members are:

A PVA member, the spouse of a member, or an unmarried child (under 24 years of age) who is dependent (as defined by the IRS) on the member for principal support.

A citizen of the United States.

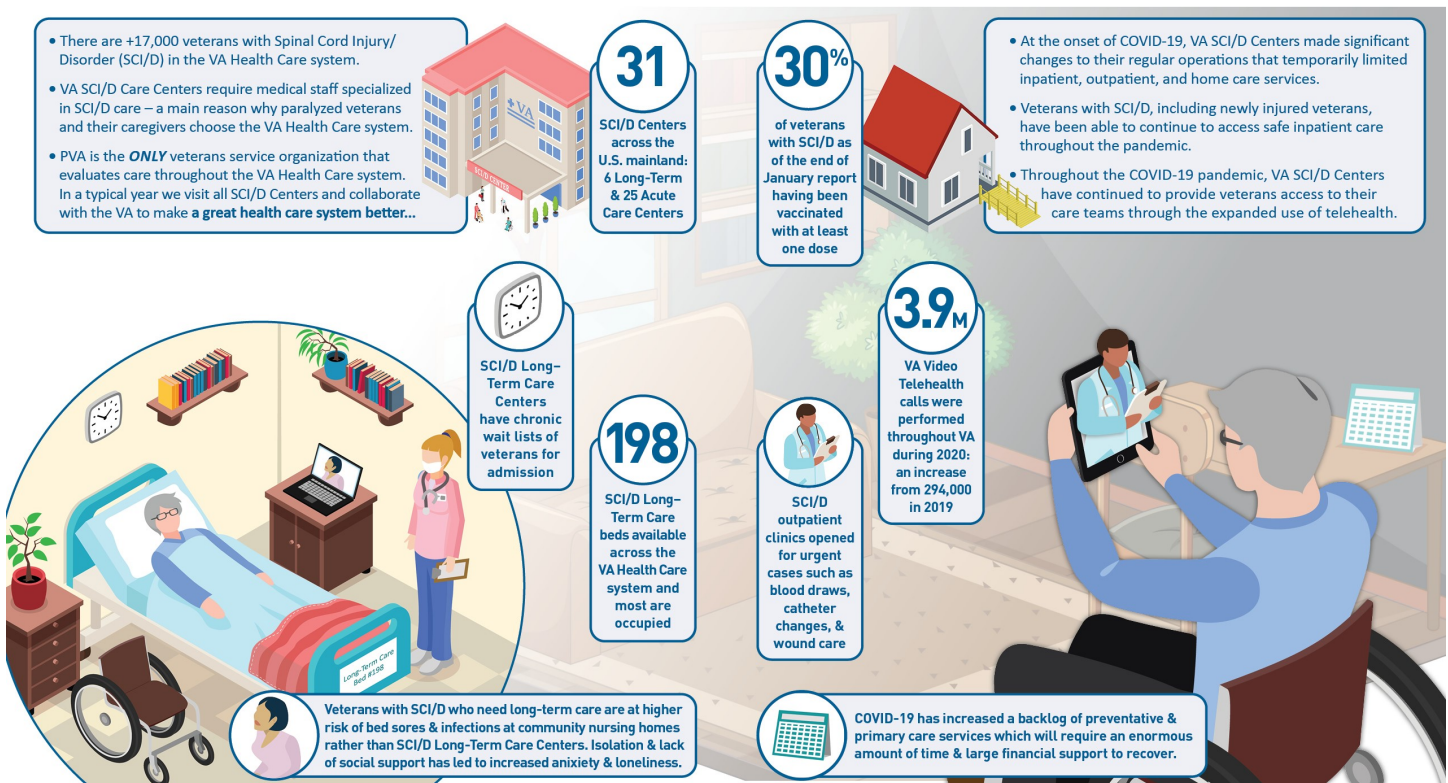
Accepted and enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited U.S. college or university.

Please Note: Previous award recipients may apply, but are limited to a total of two scholarships in a lifetime.

*We will award scholarships in the amount of **\$2,500 to full-time students** and **\$1,000 to part-time students** for the 2021-22 academic year.

For additional information and to download the application, please visit <https://pva.org/find-support/scholarship-program/>.

VA SCI/D SPOTLIGHT DURING COVID-19





Our nation's warriors - from every field of battle - possess a sense of strength, of excellence, and of commitment that we seldom see here at home. However, far too many of them are struggling to transition their abilities towards a new mission - leading themselves, their families, and their communities off the field. MVP was designed to address this challenge, and ensure that all of our nation's warriors can be as productive off the field as they were on it.

By merging vets and players, we create an environment where these warriors can share each other's strength and experience, and can support each other in building fulfilling lives of service and strength. For more information please visit:

Pacific North West — MVP | Merging Vets & Players (vetsandplayers.org)

Supporting Northwest PVA Veterans Through Amazon Smile

What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. AmazonSmile is available at smile.amazon.com on your web browser and can be activated in the Amazon Shopping app for iOS and Android phones. When you shop at AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added benefit that AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You can choose from over one million organizations to support.

Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?

On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make through AmazonSmile will result in a donation. AmazonSmile will occasionally contact you about donation amounts disbursed to your chosen charity or about the program.

Place: **Northwest Paralyzed Veterans of America** when you search for a charity.



April



4th Easter

21st Administrative Professionals Day

May

5th Cinco De Mayo

9th Mother's Day

15th Armed Forces Day

31st Memorial Day



2021 National Veterans Wheelchair Games

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games is the world's largest annual wheelchair sports event solely for military Veterans. Every year, hundreds of American heroes from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and the post-9/11 era compete in this celebration of courage and camaraderie. The National Veterans Wheelchair Games launched in 1981 with 7 events and 75 athletes. Paralyzed Veterans of America joined the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1985 to help expand the event's mission and reach. The Wheelchair Games have since grown to attract more than 500 participants each year.

For the 40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, we are excited to bring the National Veterans Wheelchair Games to New York City, August 7-14, 2021, and showcase the drive, determination and spirit of our veteran competitors. The 2021 Wheelchair Games marks the 40th Anniversary of the wheelchair sports and rehabilitation event. Throughout the weeklong event we also will remember and honor those lives lost on September 11, 2001, as 2021 also marks the 20th anniversary of that tragic day. Many of the Veterans who participate each year in the Wheelchair Games were inspired to join the military and serve our country because of the events of 9/11. In many ways our Veteran competitors are much like the city of New York—Strong, Resilient and Full of Perseverance.

The Wheelchair Games moves from city to city annually to introduce new Veterans, partners, and volunteers to the event and the world of wheelchair sports. With each community we visit, we strengthen the infrastructure for adaptive sports – generating a ripple effect felt by Veterans and people of all ages living with disabilities for years to come.

National Veterans Wheelchair Games athletes come from nearly every generation of Veterans, from World War II, Korea, Vietnam War, Gulf War, to the most recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. From newly injured first-time competitors to Paralympic athletes, each Veteran brings his or her own unique story of recovery through strength and perseverance.

Go to <https://wheelchairgames.org> for more information. Also those wanting to be a part of Team Northwest, please call and talk to your Recreation Therapist at the Seattle SCI Clinic at (206) 277-3207 or (206) 277-1648 and (206) 390-4573 for Rehab Services at American Lake VA.

Adaptive E-Sports:

Online gaming competition. Does not count against the five-event limit.

DIVISION CHANGE FOR 2021 :

- Novice: Recommended for first-time Veterans to the Wheelchair Games. Novice Veterans may opt out to compete as Open, Masters, Senior, effective for all their events.
- Open: Any competitor may select to sign up as Open for all events. Age recommendation 45 and under.
- Masters: Ages 46-65
- Seniors: Ages 66 and above

The 2021 National Veterans Wheelchair Games Athlete (Hybrid Edition)

We are proud to offer a hybrid version of the 40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games. The Hybrid version offers a competitive in-person option and an engaging atHome version. We wish we could have everyone in New York City this year but we have a responsibility to be part of the solution, to support all efforts, to ending this pandemic. We hope you will find your NVWG spirit and help us celebrate the 40th Anniversary in the hybrid version that fits your comfort level. So, whether we see you in person or support you virtually, we look forward to celebrating the 40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games with you!



NATIONAL VETERANS
**WHEELCHAIR
GAMES**

40th Anniversary

• **NYC** •

AUG 8-13
2021



Paralyzed Veterans
of America



VA | U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

WheelchairGames.org

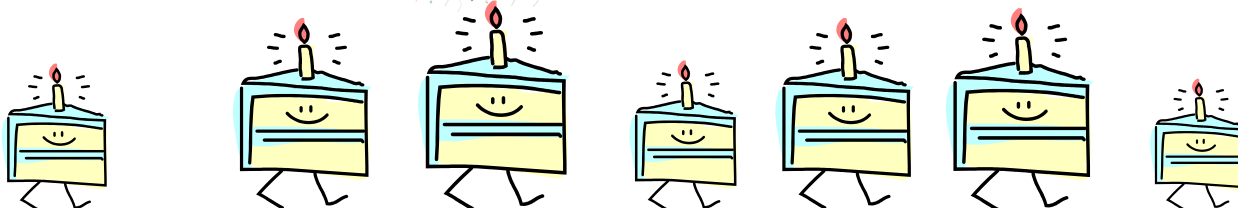
Happy Birthday!

April

Steven Johnson.....3rd	Daniel Underwood..15th
Sharon Stepp.....4th	Lynn Peterson.....15th
Christine Messmer.4th	Ray Hendrickson.....15th
Wallace Carlson.....5th	William Goss.....16th
Douglas Keil.....7th	Clayton Thornburg..16th
William English.....7th	Daniel Crim.....16th
Jay Mills.....7th	Francis Rawson.....17th
Francis Entrup.....8th	Robert Brush.....17th
John Woods.....8th	Jennifer Roney.....17th
Steven Hathon.....9th	Jeffery Sparks.....20th
Joseph Barnes.....9th	Robert Russell.....22nd
Casey Pooler.....11th	David Frymire.....22nd
William Travis.....11th	Richard Dube.....23rd
Lonnie Williams....12th	Michael Green.....26th
Michael Belfield...12th	David Meek.....27th
Steven Stiens.....13th	Jeanette Moen.....30th
D. Struchen.....14th	

May

Charles Spencer.....1st	Mike O'Neill.....18th
Brad Shepherd.....1st	Carl Casey.....18th
Richard Edlund.....2nd	Steven Tucker.....18th
Mark Hale.....3rd	Suzan Carpenter.....18th
Timothy Weber.....3rd	Mary Degg.....19th
Toai Nolan.....3rd	Stephen Pratt.....19th
Anthony King.....4th	Sheri Wills.....19th
Gregory Heimann.....5th	Robert Pressley.....21st
Jeremy Daniels.....5th	Bradley Skramstad.21st
Alex Schied.....6th	David Zurfluh.....23rd
Matthew West.....7th	Jeanne Farrell.....23rd
Anthony Hadlett.....8th	L. Mallebranche.....24th
Mark Crim.....8th	Theodore Fossos....25th
Robert Cockrell.....11th	Douglas Harsh.....25th
Stephen Alonge.....15th	John Miller.....28th
Michael Merrill.....15th	Kelly Arneson.....29th
Jerome Mischel.....16th	Joseph Borsky.....30th
Robert Rupp.....16th	Bryan Dornon.....30th
Brandon Powell.....16th	Clyde Lentz.....31st
William McIntyre.....17th	



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Vehicle Donation Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America has been on a mission to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes—to empower these brave men and women build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes—to empower these brave men and women with what they need to achieve the things they fought for: freedom and independence. They returned to a grateful nation, but also to a world with few solutions to challenges they faced. They made a decision not just to live, but to live with dignity as contributors to society. They created Paralyzed Veterans of America, an organization dedicated to veterans service, medical research and civil rights for people with disabilities.

Have an old car taking up space in your driveway? Donate it to Paralyzed Veterans of America! Call us: 877-900-8387. <https://pva.careeasy.org/HOME.html>



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