



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

New England Chapter

CORDWORD

The Monthly News Magazine of the New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America



INSIDE THIS EDITION



NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OFFICES

FROM THE HILL	6
ACADIA NATIONAL CEMETERY	8
REFILL & PHARMACY UPDATES	10
WASHINGTON UPDATE	12-13
COVID-19 NEWS & UPDATES	16-17
NSC VEHICLE MODS & REPAIRS	18

VA MISSION & MOTTO



WASHINGTON — August 26, 2020, Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie dedicated a permanent memorial at the Camp Butler National

Cemetery in Springfield, IL, celebrating President Lincoln's second inaugural address which gave VA its mission and motto.

The plaque rests at a VA-run cemetery in the city that became Lincoln's home. Next to the plaque is an interpretive sign that explains how Lincoln's words would [...continued on page 8.](#)

WOMEN'S HEALTH CTR



VA Boston announces the opening of the new Women's Health Center in Jamaica Plain. Women Veterans are the VA's largest growing patient population and we have a comprehensive team dedicated to their care.

BOSTON – VA Boston Healthcare System announces the opening of the new Women's Health Center at the Jamaica Plain Campus. Women Veterans are the VA's largest growing patient population and VA Boston has a comprehensive team [....continued on page 14.](#)

Turn Your **Used Vehicle** Into Support for Paralyzed Veterans of America



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

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We'll use the proceeds from the sale of your car, truck, RV or boat to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes.



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Vehicle donations to PVA are tax-deductible! Most vehicles are sold through local used-car markets. Our vehicle donation program works to get the highest return per vehicle and handles all the paperwork, too! Whether your vehicle sells for \$500 or less, more than \$500, or more than \$5000, you will be provided with the proper donation tax receipt(s).



Call 877-900-VETS or donate online at pva.careasy.org

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CordWord is the New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America's (New England PVA) monthly magazine that covers news, health, research, lifestyle and issues of interest and concern to Veterans and others with spinal cord injury and disease. Anyone interested in submitting an article to *CordWord* should email media@newenglandpva.org. The assertions and opinions expressed in articles and announcements in *CordWord* reflect the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the New England PVA. New England PVA can in no way whatsoever be held responsible for the content of such views nor can it be held liable for any direct or indirect damage that may arise from such views.

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Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President

The cooling weather reminds me Fall is upon us with winter just around the corner. Now is the time to get your Flu shot and start preparing yourself and home for the inevitable winter months ahead of us. We're all aware flu shots are available from the VA, but did you know you can receive a no-cost flu shot from one of your local community retail pharmacies or urgent care locations. Visit <https://www.va.gov/communitycare/flushot.asp> for details. Because of COVID limiting access to VA facilities, this might be a more convenient option for you to consider this year. In either case, with COVID still looming large, it's even more important to get your flu shot this year. As for prepping your home, the CDC has some great tips for home, car and emergencies on their website [HERE](#).

Speaking about health and circumstances at home, please remember, if you have somehow been negatively impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic and in need of a little financial assistance, the Chapter is still providing member grants up to \$500. To date, we have granted a little over \$10,000 to assist 23 chapter members across each of our New England states. For details on how to apply, please visit the Chapter website at www.newenglandpva.org. Also available through our website, and free to our members, are Chapter branded face masks and neck gaiters. Turn to [page 7](#) for details.

At this month's Board meeting we approved the 2020 Chapter budget. Its important to know, key to funding a large part of this year's budget is the inclusion and implementation of the Strategic Fundraising plan our Executive Director and I created. The plan is somewhat aggressive, but the Board and I feel confident we have the people and resources to successfully execute it, netting approximately \$140,000 toward the budget. Please keep an eye on the Cord Word, Facebook and Chapter website for event and activity information, as well as, volunteering opportunities. Also important to mention, as part of this year's budget, is an increase in the Chapter member Individual Allotment program from \$500 to \$750. To read details about the program and how to apply, please turn to [page 22](#).

Government Relations Director Kristen McCone Gordon continues to foster new and productive relationships, both at the state and federal levels, proactively creating an awareness of our organization and mission. Through these relationships, Kristen has been very successful in getting the issues of our concern and supported legislation in front of key decision makers. To read more about the great work Kristen is doing on our behalf, or to get in touch with her, please turn to "From the Hill" on [page 6](#).

Continuing, I would be remiss to not recognized the events that occurred 19 years ago on September 11th. On that day, America saw firsthand terrorism taking place here at home, on our own soil, and against our own people! It was a day none of us will ever forget and more importantly, it was a day we as a nation must ensure is never forgotten by the generations to come! Let us never forget the innocent lives taken from us that day, the brave men and women who selflessly raced into the twin towers to save the lives of others and the heroes on United Flight 93 who unquestionably saved countless lives through their valiant actions. It was day that showed the world, even in our darkest hour, we as a nation stood united to fight and win against those who harbor evil in their hearts! This is America, the greatest country on earth, and we shall never forget those who gave their lives protecting our citizens and our way of life then and now!

Finally, with so much turmoil, uncertainty and fear surrounding our lives these days, how often do you think about those around you? Martin Luther King, Jr. once said "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?". I think we would all agree, yet in our everyday lives, most are increasingly becoming more and more concerned with their own self-interest and preservation first, with little thought for those around them. Albert Einstein once said, "Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value." Now, what is the difference between success and value? I believe it is service. Success is great, but being someone who reaches out and cares for others makes someone truly valuable. Many talk about the meaning of life, and really, what is the purpose of us being here if we don't take the opportunities to change things around us for the better? The meaning of life certainly isn't 'getting a job that pays an obscene salary so we can buy the next trendy gadget'. The people most admired for their value aren't those with unlimited wealth, they're selfless people like Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King. Yes, our world has problems, there's no denying that. Yet sadly people become so isolated in their own little worlds they forget there is a beyond out there. Service is part of life that gives meaning to everything we do. When we're gone, our good deeds will continue to have an impact on those around us. When we peer outside our own lives to open up and care for others, when we listen to truths that are so often hidden, when we spend some fraction of our lives changing things around us for the better, we fulfill life's most persistent and urgent question. So what will you do for others today?

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael G. Negrete". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael G. Negrete
Chapter President/PVA National Director
and Paralyzed Veteran

From the Director's Desk

Mark Murphy, Chapter Executive Director



As we are now moving into the Fall season, it is hard for me to believe that it has been just about 6 months since we had to temporarily close our Chapter office in West Roxbury because of the pandemic. While working from home has certainly been an adjustment for myself, I am happy to share that with the gift of modern technology I am able to still keep up with the essential work of the Chapter and fulfilling my duties as Executive Director. In the past months I have never been on so many Zoom/video conference calls in my life! My hope is that we will be able to re-open the Chapter office when it is safe, prudent, and responsible to do so. I also hope that you and your families are staying safe and vigilant in these times as well. While I think we all might be tired of hearing the phrase "This is the new normal," there is a kernel of truth to it.

Speaking of COVID-19, I am happy to report that we are now offering free masks and neck gaiters branded with the New England PVA logo for members of the Chapter. Our intention in having these face coverings made is that they will be protective for you in your home or if you are going out. These masks also raise awareness of the New England PVA to the outside world, which is great marketing! We are limiting requests to one request per member while supplies last. If you are interested in receiving a mask in the mail, please visit the link on our website at https://nepva.org/covid_masks.html to put in an order. There is also a link there to donate which will help to offset shipping costs for you and other members who want and need these face coverings.

Since our last newsletter I have been busy helping to finalize our new fiscal year budget, participated in countless video conference calls, and have been working on some important initiatives and plans for various short term and long term projects for the good of the Chapter. I am also mindful that this month on September 11th was the 19th anniversary of the tragedy that occurred in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. I was a junior in high school on that day, and as I was walking down the stairs going to class a friend of mine told me that the World Trade Center buildings in New York had been attacked. One of my teachers predicted that we would never forget this day of 9/11, and he was absolutely right. Even when I joined the Army 7 years later the attacks of September 11th loomed very large on just about everything, as I entered military service at a time when we were knee deep in both the Iraq War and Operation Enduring Freedom. Every year when we remember those who died on that day and their surviving families, I am reminded of a quote that has always moved me from former President George W. Bush when he was speaking at the Pentagon in 2008. He said, "One of the worst days in America's history saw some of the bravest acts in Americans' history. We will always honor the heroes of 9/11. Here at this hallowed place, we pledge that we will never forget their sacrifice." May we always honor and remember the heroes of 9/11 and the ultimate sacrifices they made.

Mark Murphy
Chapter Executive Director





From the Hill

Kristen McCone Gordon, Chapter Government Relations Director

I'm pleased to share the following updates and information on the Chapter's government relations work. As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions on our legislative priorities, suggestions for issues to explore, or would like to be more involved in our government relations activities going forward. I look forward to a busy and

productive fall!

New England PVA conducts Congressional Briefings throughout New England

Throughout the year, I meet with the district office staff of our New England Congressional Delegation. The objectives of these meetings are to give our Representatives a better sense of who we are as an organization, highlight the needs and challenges of our members, and to discuss our Chapter's legislative priorities. This past month, I had the opportunity to speak with district staff members for Senator Whitehouse (D,RI), Congressman Moulton (D,MA), Congressman Keating (D,MA), Congresswoman Pressley (D,MA), and Congresswoman Kuster (D,NH).

Among other issues, we discussed the importance of protecting specialized services at SCI Centers, how our members shouldn't have to shoulder the burden of the full cost of an adapted automobile, and why Congress should make access to IVF a permanent part of the medical benefits package at the VA. We also discussed our work at the state level to ensure non-discriminatory Crisis Standards of Care guidelines are created throughout New England, and discussed the importance of ensuring that each of our members will be able to safely cast a ballot in the upcoming election.

All of the staff members were very engaged in the discussion and each committed to speaking with their boss about these issues. I look forward to following up with each office and letting you know who officially pledges their support on our priorities. If you have any questions on the issues we discussed, or would like me to raise an issue on your behalf in the future, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Getting Out the VOTE

Election season is here! Our National PVA office is working hard to ensure that paralyzed veterans, and the larger disability community as well, do not encounter accessibility challenges while voting either in person or by mail. Our colleagues in DC are urging all members to create a voting access plan now, to ensure you are able to cast your vote both safely and securely. For more information on what to consider while making your plan, as well as a state-by-state comparison on early voting policies, please visit [PVA.org/vote](https://www.newenglandpva.org/vote). Please also be on the lookout for information regarding an upcoming webinar for PVA members on voting during the pandemic!

Should you encounter any issues while voting, or have concerns about the accessible voting options in your state, please contact your Protection & Advocacy System immediately and let us know as well. The contact information for all Protection & Advocacy Systems in New England are below:

Connecticut

Disability Rights Connecticut
846 Wethersfield Ave.
Hartford, CT 06114
800-842-7303 (toll free in CT)
860-297-4300 (voice)
860-509-4992 (videophone)
info@disrightsct.org
www.disrightsct.org

Maine

Disability Rights Maine
160 Capitol Street, Suite 4
Augusta, ME 04330
800.452.1948 (V/TTY)
207.626.2774 (V/TTY)
207.621.1419 (FAX)
advocate@drme.org

Massachusetts

Disability Law Center
11 Beacon Street, Suite 925
Boston, MA 02108
617-723-8455 or 800-872-9992
mail@dlc-ma.org

New Hampshire

Disability Rights Center NH
64 North Main Street,
Suite 2, 3rd Floor,
Concord, NH 03301-4913
(603) 228-0432 or 1-800-834-1721
mail@drcnh.org

Rhode Island

Disability Rights Rhode Island
Providence, RI 02903
Voice: (401) 831-3150
33 Broad Street, Suite 601
info@drri.org

Vermont

Disability Rights Vermont
141 Main St., Ste.7
Montpelier, VT 05602
Toll Free 1-800-834-7890
Tel: (802) 229-1355
info@disabilityrightsvt.org

UPDATE: Member COVID-19 Relief Grant

By Mark Murphy, Chapter Executive Director

Back in March, when the pandemic of COVID-19 upended people's lives across the world, more locally the impact was certainly felt on the New England PVA Chapter and our members. While the commitment to ensuring the health and safety of the membership and community of New England PVA is always a priority, that commitment has been greatly tested because of the global pandemic. It is clinically recognized that those with spinal cord injuries and disease are some of the most susceptible populations to COVID-19, inherently suffering from two of its major underlying risk conditions – compromised immune and respiratory systems. In addition to the impact on Chapter members, New England PVA as a non-profit organization was also bracing for the financial consequences of the pandemic. We were unable to plan for and host several fundraising plans, ideas, and events, which would have allowed us to raise significant amounts of income in support of our members and organization. To counteract this, back in April and May the Chapter applied for grant funding from foundations and organizations across New England. We were extremely fortunate to be awarded several generous grants, so in May the Board of Directors and staff assessed and determined how the Chapter might use those funds to continue its positive response to its members who had been negatively impacted by the pandemic. This is where the Member COVID-19 Relief Grant Program was born.

The purpose of the program has been to support New England Chapter members who have been affected in a demonstrable way by the pandemic. More specifically, the intention of program was to assist members needing help paying for food, housing, health care, and other basic living expenses with up to a \$500 grant. Once the details for this

program were approved by the Chapter Board of Directors, members were informed of how to apply for a grant through an email blast, information in the monthly newsletter, and also through a postcard that was sent to all members in the mail.

Since the start of the program in June, the response has been overwhelmingly positive and inspiring. To date, 22 grants have been awarded to Chapter members across each of the New England states, and expressed needs have included food insecurity, purchasing of PPE and medical supplies, members being out of work or having a spouse out of work and their inability to pay for basic living expenses and bills, accessibility needs such as help repairing a walkway and improvements on an emergency exit for a member's electric wheelchair, and helping to pay for home health aides and caregivers. One member who received a grant reached out to say, "Thank you so much for the grant I received yesterday. It was greatly appreciated and will be put to good use." Another member who repaired their emergency exit on their walkway said, "Just want you to know that we received the check yesterday. Money is being used for the walkway we did this summer. Thank you very much."

The Chapter leadership of New England PVA always strives to be focused on its members, because that is exactly who we serve and why we exist. While the challenges of the pandemic have been enormous, the Member COVID-19 Relief Grant Program has been an example of hope in our community, because through this program we have offered at least some relief to some of our most vulnerable members in need of support. Amid the challenges of the pandemic, we hope that a lasting takeaway is that the New England PVA will always be there for its members, even in their darkest hour.

FREE Member Masks and Neck Gaiters



New England PVA Chapter members can now receive two free reusable cloth masks and neck gaiters. Simply complete and submit the request form on the Chapter website at https://nepva.org/covid_masks.html with your name, current mailing address and phone number. Limit one request per member while supplies last.

To offset shipping cost for you and/or other members in need, please help by making a donation in any amount by click associate [website link](#).



Secretary Wilkie Honors President Lincoln's 2nd Inaugural Address Giving VA its Mission and Motto

VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs



WASHINGTON — August 26, 2020, Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Robert Wilkie dedicated a permanent memorial at the Camp Butler National

Cemetery in Springfield, IL, celebrating President Lincoln's second inaugural address which gave VA its mission and motto.

The plaque rests at a VA-run cemetery in the city that became Lincoln's home. Next to the plaque is an interpretive sign that

explains how Lincoln's words would come to serve as VA's motto and that vision grew into the department we know today.

March 4, 1865, Lincoln stood at the U.S. Capitol and sought to heal the nation in one of the most important speeches in American history. At the end of his remarks, Lincoln asked the nation to care for those Americans

who take the oath and fight to defend us, a call that VA still answers today.

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations," Lincoln said.

Under Secretary Wilkie's direction, all 145 VA national cemeteries will display these interpretive signs, so all Americans understand the importance of VA's mission.

"Today's VA welcomes all Veterans, including the 10% of all Veterans who are women. The words that brought us here should not to be diluted, parsed or cancelled," Wilkie said. "The words that brought us here ought to be preserved as they were spoken and displayed so every generation understands the origin of America's progress in becoming the most tolerant nation on earth."

VA Dedicates Acadia National Cemetery in Maine

VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today dedicated a new national cemetery in rural Jonesboro, Maine.

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie unveiled the dedication plaque for [Acadia National Cemetery](#), the first national cemetery in the state to be open to new interments in nearly 60 years.

"This new cemetery nestled here in the balsam fir forests of 'Down East' Maine is an everlasting shrine to our Veterans," said Wilkie. "It reminds us every day of the sacrifices that generations of men and women from this hardy, practical and intensely patriotic corner of the nation have made for all of us."

Construction on the first phase of the cemetery is now complete, offering space for more than 1,400 interments including caskets, in-ground burial of cremains, columbaria space for cremains, and a memorial wall. At full capacity the cemetery will be able to accommodate just over 7,000 interments. There are three state run Veterans cemeteries in Maine, the closest of which is 149 miles from Jonesboro. The only other VA national cemetery in the state, Togus National Cemetery near Augusta, opened in 1866 and was closed to first interments in 1961, though subsequent interments in the same gravesite as another family member have taken place in the decades since.

Acadia National Cemetery is the fifth to open under the VA's Rural Initiative program, which provides burial access for Veterans not currently served by a national cemetery within the state or VA grant-funded state cemetery.

Since 2014 VA has dedicated rural cemeteries in Montana, North Dakota, Idaho, Wisconsin and now Maine, with cemeteries in Wyoming, Nevada and Utah currently under construction or planned.

The 6.2-acre cemetery is expected to serve a population of more than 23,000 Veterans, their spouses and eligible family members within a 75-mile radius of nearby Machias. The first interments at the new cemetery were conducted in July 2020.

Acadia National Cemetery is supervised by Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, MA. For more information, contact Massachusetts National Cemetery director Richard Wallace at (508) 563-7113. For information on VA burial benefits, or to apply for burial benefits in advance of need, visit VA's [National Cemetery Administration](#) or call (800) 535-1117.

Due to state restrictions on gathering sizes and concerns over the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the number of attendees at the dedication was limited to 50, with participants wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. In attendance was a small delegation of dignitaries including Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Randy Reeves, Senator Susan Collins, Air Force Maj. Gen. Douglas Farnham, the Adjutant General of Maine, state and local leaders as well as representatives from a variety of Veterans organizations. Photos and video of the dedication can be found on the [National Cemetery Administration's Facebook site](#).

Getting Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again with Indego®

New VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® Exoskeleton at no cost.



What is Indego? A robotic device that enables veterans to walk again.

Indego is an FDA-approved exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.

Indego can currently be used with spinal cord injury levels of T3 to L5 in community or home settings. The device offers:

- Lightweight, modular design
- Slim profile compatible with most wheelchairs
- Rapid setup and breakdown for easy transportation
- Can be used with forearm crutches or walker



Free Indego Webinars

During the first Thursday of every month you can join a free live webinar to learn more about the Indego and hear from a veteran who owns a device already.



Contact us today to find out if you are eligible to receive an Indego exoskeleton

Email: support.indego@parker.com

Phone: 844-846-3346



CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION TIPS



WEAR A MASK



WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY



COUGH ETIQUETTE

Cover Your Mouth
With Sleeve Or Elbow



**DON'T TOUCH EYES,
NOSE OR MOUTH
WITH UNWASHED HANDS**



**CLEAN AND
DISINFECT**



**AVOID CONTACT WITH
SICK PEOPLE**

Rx Refills During the Pandemic

In the Spotlight via MyHealtheVet



Tips for Refilling Your Prescriptions

As COVID-19 spreads, people who regularly take prescription drugs for chronic conditions such as [diabetes](#) or [high blood pressure](#) may be wondering what will happen with their refills. VA wants you to know we're working hard to make sure you get your prescriptions on time, and when you need them.

We ask that you request refills of your VA Prescriptions as soon as possible. VA will process your refill request and have it sent to you before you're scheduled to run out.

How do Veterans request refills of their prescriptions?

To prevent waste and reduce the risk that unneeded medications could fall into the wrong hands, VA does not automatically refill medications. To receive a medication refill authorized by your VA prescriber, you must actively request a refill using one of the methods described below:

- Online with [My HealtheVet](#): You can request refills of your refillable VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries, view VA prescription history online.
- The NEW [Rx Refill Mobile App](#): You can request refills of your refillable

VA-issued prescriptions, track VA prescription deliveries, view VA prescription history from the convenience of your mobile device.

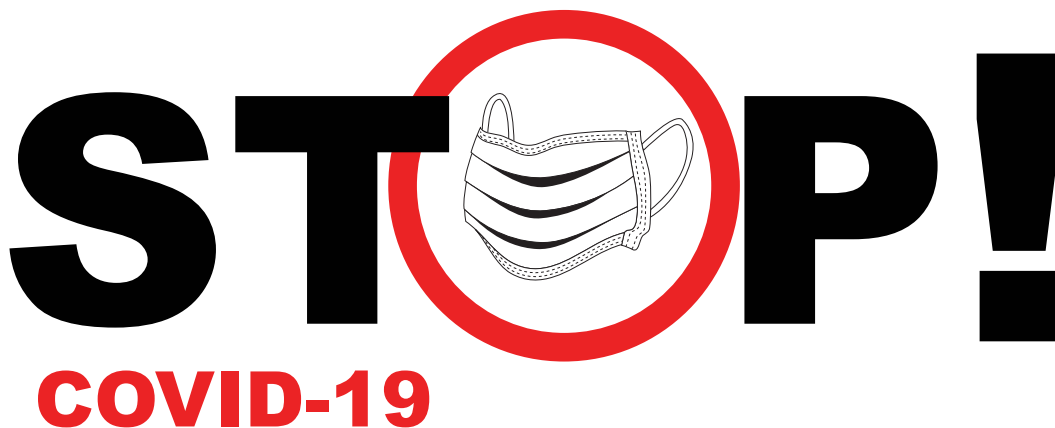
- Telephone Call: Most VA Pharmacies have automated telephone refill lines. You can find the phone number of your local VA Pharmacy on your prescription label. To order refills by phone, you will need the prescription number (shown as RX # on the prescription label) and your Social Security Number. For many prescriptions that are no longer refillable, this automated system may allow you to send a request for more of this medication to be sent to you. For some medications, the healthcare team will need to contact you first.
- By Mail: [VA Pharmacy provides a refill request form](#) with each prescription filled. To refill by mail, please complete the request form and mail it to your VA pharmacy at the address listed on the paperwork that arrives with your prescription.

The COVID-19 situation is changing fast. Try not to forget to take your medications or refill your prescriptions. Not having certain medications could cause health problems that require medical attention, putting you at risk of exposure with a facility visit. Veterans who forget to re-order their medications in time have three options. You can contact your VA medical center pharmacy, call the phone number on the prescription label, or use My HealtheVet's [Secure Messaging](#) (sign in required) to get in touch with your health care team, especially if your prescription is no longer refillable.

As a last resort, you may visit your VA pharmacy in person to request a refill. You may be subject to screening before entering the facility. You might also have a very long wait to have your prescription refilled. Visiting in person can unnecessarily put you and others at risk of infection.

Delivery times can be affected by weather and the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the Track Delivery feature on My HealtheVet (sign in required), you can obtain the tracking number in use by either the U.S. Postal Service or UPS.

Keeping yourself healthy is one of the best ways to defend yourself against COVID-19. VA knows that this can be a stressful time for Veterans, make sure you're doing everything you can to keep your immune system strong and healthy.



Mail Out Pharmacy Extension in Lowell

By Kyle Toto, Public Affairs Boston VA Health Care System



The mail out pharmacy has seen great success this year and Veterans are very satisfied with the service according to survey data.

The mail out pharmacy has seen great success throughout this year and Veterans are very satisfied with the service according to survey data we have collected. Since October 1, 2019 we have successfully mailed out 87% of all prescriptions to the Veterans, we serve at the Lowell Clinic. As we continue COVID-19 safety measures for Veterans and staff receiving care and medications from the Lowell Clinic, we are suspending all prescription filling and pick-up at the clinic until further notice. This measure decreases the chance of spreading infection to other Veterans and staff. Veterans will continue to receive routine refills and prescriptions by VA's mail-order service which may take 7-10 days to process and deliver. There is no registration required for mail delivery of medication, no signature required for delivery, but deliveries do require a physical address not a PO box.

Veterans are urged to order their medications before they run out. Urgently needed medications may be sent by overnight delivery. If the medication is needed the same day, your provider may give you a prescription for up to a

7-day supply that you can fill at a local community pharmacy of your choice.

Lowell Providers:

1. Pharmacy window service at the Lowell CBOC is suspended until further notice. Mail will remain the preferred option for all non-urgent, routine prescriptions.
2. Priority/overnight mail is also available from any main campus for those items of urgency that can wait until next day.
3. The First Fill national pharmacy contract is now available for the Lowell CBOC. First Fill can be used in an emergency to provide a 7-day supply of any formulary medication to the Veteran. Providers can write a prescription and provide a voucher for the Veteran to fill at any local, community pharmacy. First Fill utilization should be reserved for situations where overnight or routine mail delivery would not support the clinical needs of the patient. If the medication is needed beyond 7 days, the provider would also enter a prescription in CPRS for the remaining quantity to be sent to the patient by mail or overnight mail.

Providers and nurses will be receiving training on First Fill over the next few weeks.

4. Clinic stock will continue to be managed and supported by pharmacy. Greg Deroma, Pharmacy Supervisor, remains the point of contact via Skype, email or phone 857-364-6704.
5. PACT Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Lisa Rogers, remains on station to support PACT teams with clinical consultations and pharmacy questions.
6. Lauren Toscano, PGY2 Admin Pharmacy Resident, will be attending bi weekly provider meetings as additional pharmacy support for answering/triaging questions and concerns.

be there.

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PVA WASHINGTON UPDATE

PVA Washington Update Volume 26, Number 15

Congress Focuses on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Care Services

Since our last update, several bills to prevent veteran suicide and improve VA mental health care services have passed or been introduced in Congress. On August 5, the Senate unanimously passed S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act to improve veterans' access to mental health care. A similar House version is scheduled to be examined at a full, House Veterans Affairs' Committee (HVAC) hearing on September 10. Despite some differences, both bills offer comprehensive approaches to connect more veterans with mental health care, seek to bolster VA's mental health workforce, and increase rural or hard-to-reach veterans' access to VA mental health care and related services. Several new bills recently introduced in the House will also be

discussed during the September hearing. They include H.R. 7747, the VA Solid Start Reporting Act; H.R. 7541, the VA Zero Suicide Demonstration Project; H.R. 7504, the VA Clinical TEAM Culture Act of 2020; and H.R. 7964, the Peer Support for Veteran Families Act. PVA helped shape the language for each of these bills and many others to ensure they address the needs of catastrophically disabled veterans. PVA was invited to testify at the hearing, which is scheduled for 10:00 am ET. A link to observe the hearing will be posted on the HVAC website which is located here.

COVID-19 Relief Packages, Government Funding – Where Things Stand

Congress left town in early August without taking any action on relief packages to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The House-passed H.R. 6800, the HEROES Act, was sitting in the Senate when Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell unveiled on July 27 the Republicans' version of a coronavirus bill called the HEALS Act.

Like the HEROES Act, the HEALS Act contains an additional \$1,200 economic impact payment for Americans. The Senate bill would also ensure that adult dependents with disabilities and their parents and caretakers are among those eligible for these recovery rebates. The CARES Act that passed in April had denied those critical financial supports to parents with adult children living with a variety of conditions and also excluded many adult children who provide the majority of the financial support for their elderly parents.

In a letter to the House and Senate leadership, PVA urged retention of those payments in any forthcoming COVID relief legislation and expressed support for inclusion of provisions from the HEROES Act that would allow a temporary, 25 percent increase of VA's Special Monthly Compensation (SMC)/Aid and Attendance (A&A) benefits so catastrophically disabled veterans can purchase personal protective equipment and the necessary care they need. PVA also endorsed the language in the HEROES Act that would enhance funding for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS).

At the same time, PVA expressed its concerns about several troubling sections in the HEALS Act. Included in that bill is language that would remove important protections for people with disabilities by limiting liability for a wide variety of unlawful conduct. Not only would the HEALS Act make devastating changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but it would also strip protections from other civil rights laws such as the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as well as other health and safety laws.

The HEALS Act also contains a section that would establish so-called Rescue Committees for various federal trust funds including those for Social Security and Medicare. Recommendations from these committees would be considered under expedited procedures and could provide cover for damaging cuts in benefits. If coupled with an ill-advised payroll tax deferral that has been proposed by the President, this could drive calls for devastating reductions in economic and health care supports for millions of elderly and disabled Americans.

Following concerns about reported mail delivery delays, the House returned to Washington on Saturday, August 22, to vote on a bill that would include \$25 billion in new funding for the U.S. Postal Service and reverse changes implemented in recent weeks to mail delivery and operations. In the Senate, Majority Leader McConnell unveiled a slimmed down version of HEALS in an attempt to restart negotiations on passage of a COVID relief bill. His latest legislation would add several billion dollars for Post Office funding, an additional \$300 per week unemployment compensation, another round of the Paycheck Protection Program, and funds for school reopening but also retains the damaging provisions that absolve employers and businesses from discriminatory actions under several civil rights laws, including the ADA. It's unclear whether any resolution will be reached prior to Congress's return following Labor Day.

As for the looming end of the fiscal year, a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government until after the presidential election is also being discussed. Only a handful of scheduled legislative days remain before the end of the current fiscal year on September 30 and Congress has yet to pass any of the annual funding bills. If passed, a CR will likely maintain current year funding levels for an unspecified date after the November election or even into 2021.

VA Publishes Caregiver Final Rule

The [final rule](#) making reforms to VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) was published on August 1. It becomes effective on October 1, 2020. Here are some of the most significant changes it makes to the current program:

- “Inability to Perform an Activity of Daily Living”: now means an activity of daily living (ADL) for which a veteran or servicemember requires personal care services each time he or she completes one or more of a specified list of ADLs; thereby, excluding veterans and servicemembers who need help completing an ADL only some of the time.
- “In Need of Personal Care Services”: now means that an eligible veteran requires in-person personal care services from another person, and without such personal care services, other in-person caregiving arrangements (including respite care or the assistance of a different caregiver) would be required to support the eligible veteran's safety.
- “Monthly Stipend Rates”: now based on the Office of Personnel Management General Schedule (GS) Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1 based on the locality pay area in which the eligible veteran resides, divided by 12.
- “Serious Injury”: now defined to mean any service-connected disability that is rated at 70 percent or more by VA; or is combined with any other service-connected disability or disabilities, for a combined rating of 70 percent or more.
- “Unable to self-sustain in the community”: now means that an eligible veteran requires personal care services each time he or she completes three or more of the seven ADLs listed in the definition of an “inability to perform an activity of daily living,” and is fully

dependent on a caregiver to complete such ADLs; or has a need for supervision, protection, or instruction on a continuous basis.

- “Overpayments”: any payment made by VA under this program to an individual in excess of the amount due, to which the individual was not eligible, or was made in error.

According to VA, once the Secretary has certified to Congress that VA's new caregiver information technology system is fully implemented, PCAFC will expand to eligible pre-9/11 veterans in two phases, beginning this October 2020. VA plans to provide an exact date for phase one in late August and will not begin accepting applications until October.

The first phase will expand the PCAFC to eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a “serious injury” in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service on or before May 7, 1975. The final phase of expansion will occur two years after the first expansion and will expand the PCAFC to include eligible veterans from all eras regardless of when an eligible veteran's serious injury was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.

Under the final rule, the term “serious injury” has been expanded to include illnesses such as ALS and MS, which is a win for PVA members. However, the implementation of a requirement to be rated at 70 percent or higher means that veterans receiving the lowest levels of caregiver benefits, as well as some of those receiving higher levels, will no longer be eligible for the program.

PVA's Government Relations staff will closely monitor VA's implementation of the caregiver expansion and will be ready to address any concerns should they arise.

Respite Relief for Military & Veteran Caregivers

PVA continues to work with members of Congress to repeal the ban on In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and make such services a permanent part of VA's medical benefits package. Veteran infertility has been a topic of much discussion on the Hill this summer and we are pleased that language was included in the House's Fiscal Year 2021 Military Construction/VA funding bill addressing the issue. A similar effort is likely whenever the Senate begins work on their version of the bill. As we reported last

month, PVA testified at a House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health hearing titled, “[Veterans' Access to Reproductive Health Care](#).” Our oral and written testimony called for inclusion of surrogacy and gamete donation to assistive reproductive technologies provided by VA, and the importance of asking about sexual health and incontinence, as well as the need for more research on reproductive health among veterans with SCI/D.



New Women's Health Clinic Space at Jamaica Plain

By Mackenzie Adams, Boston VA Public Affairs



VA Boston announces the opening of the new Women's Health Center in Jamaica Plain. Women Veterans are the VA's largest growing patient population and we have a comprehensive team dedicated to their care.

BOSTON – VA Boston Healthcare System announces the opening of the new Women's Health Center at the Jamaica Plain Campus. Women Veterans are the VA's largest growing patient population and VA Boston has a comprehensive team dedicated to their care.

"We've been waiting a long time for the new space to be completed and we're excited about the expansion and the opportunities it brings to Women's Health; to add and grow our services," said Jay Barrett, RN, Nurse Manager of the Women Veterans Health Clinic.

The new Women's Health Center is designed to support the VA's Patient-

Aligned Care Team (PACT) model. This model of care has better patient outcomes and reduces patient anxiety while receiving care. Renovations of the new space are following a flood in February of 2016.

The team of engineers took this unique opportunity to upgrade the electrical, plumbing, and HVAC systems. Other updates to the space included new security systems for access control, temperature controls, additional space, and new furnishings and artwork designed to provide a nature-inspired experience.

"Our Women Veterans deserve the highest quality of health care and now we have the space to deliver all the services they need to get there," said Barrett. "We welcome every woman Veteran to join us in our commitment of caring for their health."

The new space allows patients to be comfortable in an exam room with multi-disciplinary providers coming to the Veteran rather than the Veteran going to different provider offices. This PACT model helps empower patients to be in control of their own health care. Shared provider collaboration rooms, allows for quality discussion when deciding different routes of care to offer a patient.

For more information about our Women Veteran Health Service, please visit us at <https://www.boston.va.gov/services/women/index.asp>

Watch a video tour of the new space here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=612802916326439>

National Spinal Cord Injury Awareness Month

PVA via Facebook



The goal of SCI Awareness Month is to educate the public on how prevalent this injury is. In addition, it serves as a way to spread prevention tips and increase support and understanding for those living with SCI.

- Every 48 seconds, someone becomes paralyzed in the United States.
- Approximately 17,700 people are newly spinal cord injured each year.

The effects of a spinal cord injury can be life-altering. However, individuals with SCI often overcome the challenges of their condition and go on to lead normal, happy lives. In fact, many of them go on to achieve incredible things! Hear some of our UNSTOPPABLE member stories here: <https://pva.org/about-us/pvaunstoppable/>

August Cord Word Photo Credits



Sail To Prevail photos taken by Dan Erwin



Riverside Accessible Racing pictures taken by Chapter member Debra Freed.

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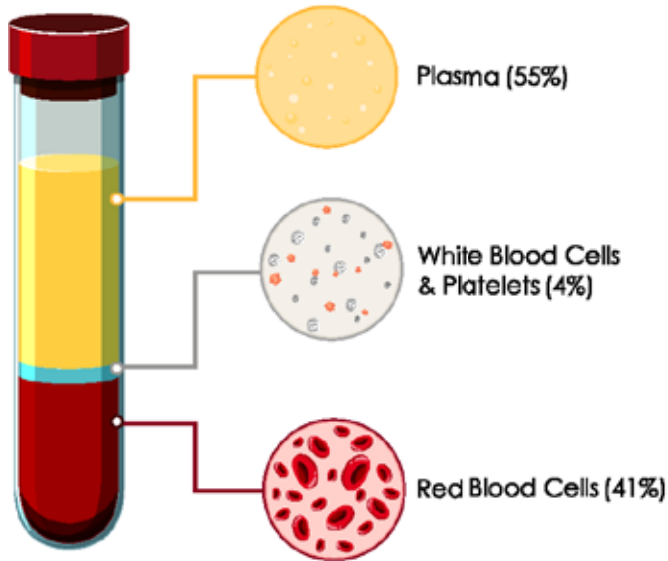


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VA Announces New Clinical Trial for Veterans with COVID-19

VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

COMPOSITION OF BLOOD



Researchers to study blood plasma for treating seriously ill patients

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a new clinical trial to study convalescent plasma for treating seriously ill [COVID-19](#) patients as part of a larger effort to give Veterans faster access to potential COVID-19 treatments and test the treatments’ effectiveness.

The trial is the first of multiple studies in VA Coronavirus Research and Efficacy Studies (VA CURES), a master protocol that offers a standardized framework for studying potential treatments for COVID-19 without the need for a new study design and protocol each time.

“This trial will go a long way toward helping in the fight against COVID-19,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “VA CURES will provide valuable information that will benefit our Veterans who are battling COVID-19, as well as other patients and the medical community in general.”

The trial will enroll around 700 Veterans with COVID-19 who are hospitalized at VA medical centers. A study team will randomize the study volunteers to receive either convalescent plasma or a saline placebo, and track and assess recovery and effects of the treatment.

Convalescent plasma is donated by people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies against the virus in their blood. Antibodies are proteins the body makes to fight infections.

The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) previously authorized the use of convalescent plasma as an investigational treatment for COVID-19 through FDA’s expanded access program. The program, used widely throughout the nation, including at many VA sites, ended Aug. 28. FDA has since authorized the [emergency use](#) of the therapy based on the available scientific evidence to date. FDA stresses further evidence from rigorous trials — such as the new VA study — is “critically important” for establishing safety and efficacy.

Visit [VA COVID-19 research](#) for more information.



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Vehicle Donation Program

We’ll use the proceeds from the sale of your vehicle to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes.

To learn more:

877-900-VETS | pva.careasy.org



VA's Digital COVID-19 Screening for Veterans, Employees, Aids in Low Infection Rate

via VantagePoint



WASHINGTON —The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today the use of [digital screening at VA health care facilities](#) and [increased telehealth](#) has enabled the department to dramatically increase the rate of COVID-19 testing for Veterans and employees.

To date, VA has tested more than 576,000 Veterans and employees for COVID-19, one of many aggressive steps used to prevent transmission of the virus.

The Veterans Health Administration's COVID-19 employee infection rate is less than 1% of its workforce – much lower than other health care systems. Employees testing positive for coronavirus could be due to exposure in the community and not related to any potential workplace exposure.

“Testing is a critical piece of VA's public health response to protect and care for Veterans, their families, health care providers and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Our testing policies and procedures have helped to significantly limit the spread of

the virus within our medical facilities, while universal COVID-19 testing for patients and staff as well as other [safeguards at VA's community living centers and spinal cord injury units](#), has minimized the COVID-19 exposure risk for some of our most vulnerable patient populations.”

In March, VA tested an average of 631 people a day for COVID-19. As of Aug. 24, VA is currently testing an average of 6,300 people daily, approximately a 900% increase, and has diagnosed 43,276 Veterans with COVID-19. Among its 9.2 million patients enrolled in VA health care, 3,195 are active COVID-19 cases, 413 of which are inpatient. A total of 37,293 VA COVID-19 patients have reached convalescence, meaning they have been discharged from care or are 14 days past their last positive test, whichever comes later.

Veterans can request a COVID-19 test by sending a secure message to their provider via [My HealtheVet](#), [scheduling an appointment online](#) or [calling their provider by phone](#).

Veterans must be enrolled in VA health care to receive a COVID-19 test through VA. There is no copay. Results typically take two to four days and the medical provider will contact the Veteran with results. Veterans who test positive should monitor their symptoms, stay in touch with their medical provider and avoid contact with anyone else.

Visit [VA's public health response webpage](#) for more information on ways to protect against COVID-19. For a real-time look at the status of COVID-19 patients who have been tested or treated at VA facilities visit [VA's COVID-19 National Summary webpage](#).

Combating Feelings of Isolation and Loneliness During COVID-19

via pva.org

Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) wants our veterans and their caregivers to overcome loneliness during this time of social distancing.

While sheltering in place helps us stop the spread of COVID-19, the decreased social engagement and lessening of medical visits can lead to feelings of helplessness, isolation, and loneliness. For those living with mental health issues and chronic diseases, we may see a worsening of symptoms. There are things we can do to take care of ourselves and help #BeThere for others. If you are able, try to spend a little time outdoors each day, even if just for a few minutes on your front porch, as there are many benefits to being outside. Keep your mind occupied and take a break from the news by working on free coursework, listening to audio-books, watching virtual concerts, plays, & tours of museums, or calling or writing friends and loved ones. Don't have Internet access? For the

next two months, Comcast is providing free Internet service for disabled veterans.

If you do find yourself struggling with increased anxiety, depression or other psychological symptoms, you can call or text mental health professionals at Psychological Health Center of Excellence Psychological Recourse Center, call or chat with peers at Veterans 4 Warriors, or use some of the self-help strategies at Make the Connection. If you need help right away, we encourage you to call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255, and press “1” if you are a veteran, texting 838255, or chatting via their <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/hotline>.

Vehicle Modifications and Equipment (Non-Service Connected Veterans (NSC))

VA Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services

VA prosthetic and sensory aids service (PSAS) is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. VA provides all clinically appropriate and commercially available, state-of-the-art prosthetic equipment, sensory aids and devices to veterans that cross the full range of patient care.

Eligibility for vehicle modifications:

- Veterans who are enrolled in VHA's healthcare system (Note: Vehicle modifications can be provided as medical services).
- Veterans with a non-service connected disability and not eligible for the AAE program.

Eligibility for VA driver's training program

VA has 48 facilities that offer this programming. These programs have over 100 specially adapted vehicles (cars, mini-vans and full sized vans) available to train Veterans / Service members with various disabilities (e.g., Spinal Cord Injury, Amputation, Brain Injury, Stroke, Orthopedic conditions).

- Veterans / Service members may be provided a clinical program of primary services that include:
- Pre-Driving Assessment; Behind-the Wheel Assessment; and equipment evaluation.

What does vehicle modifications include?

- Non-operational equipment (e.g., wheelchair tie downs; vehicle lifts; items to assist with entering / exiting the vehicle.

- Modifications on the drivers or passenger side.

What does vehicle modifications exclude?

- Operational equipment (e.g., low effort power brakes; low effort power steering column; hand controls).
- Benefits greater than those eligible for VBA's AAE program. (Note: No 2 vehicles modified in a 4 year period).

Is pre-authorization required?

Yes. Before any vehicle modifications or equipment for the vehicle is installed, repaired, or replaced, authorization by the VA is required.

Veterans / Service members should consult with VHA when making decisions regarding vehicle selection, modifications, or adaptations specifically required to meet individual needs. Evaluation for proper driving equipment is critical BEFORE purchasing a new vehicle in order to avoid unnecessary personal costs.

To apply for vehicle modifications, please contact your local Prosthetic Service at the nearest VA medical center or visit www.prosthetics.va.gov for more information about Prosthetics.

Frequently asked questions about vehicle modifications and driver training can be found online at: www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/FAQ-AAE.asp



Vehicle Modification Maintenance After Veteran Privately Purchased Vehicle - NSC

Contributed by Dave Qualey, MobilityWorks of Londonderry, NH

You might not be aware of this, but even if you privately purchased your vehicle conversion, the VA may be able to assist with its continued maintenance and repairs. Here's a brief overview of what the process involves.

Once determined that the equipment and/or modification that a you purchased is medically necessary and appropriate, you can ask your VA healthcare Provider to have it added to your VA Form 10-2319 (ADP) - Record of Prosthetic Service under Automobile Adaptive Equipment. The VA can then assume the responsibilities for maintaining and repairing it.

To define "Appropriate", means that the equipment is medically necessary AND it's something the VA would have prescribed for you. An example of inappropriate might be a Veteran who buys a wheelchair that is too small or too large. Yes, it's medically necessary, but not appropriate. At that point the VA should offer an appropriate alternative. Another example may be if

a Veteran who can ambulate buys a lowered floor wheelchair accessible van. If a non-service connected Veteran has the ability to transfer or ambulate the VA will typically NOT pay for an accessible van conversion. In the past they would, but now it's typically only when a Veteran cannot safely transfer and needs to stay in his/her wheelchair for transport.

So again, once determined that the van conversion is appropriate and medically necessary your VA healthcare Provider should be able to add it to your prosthetics record and assume responsibility for it.

For more information, please contact your nearest MobilityWorks dealer listed on page 19 or PVA Service Officer listed on page 3.



Connect With What Matters



Being there makes a difference

Recently the Ride-Away team joined forces with MobilityWorks so that we could provide our veterans with the largest selection of mobility solutions that best fit their physical capabilities and lifestyle. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together find the best solution. Collectively, Ride-Away and MobilityWorks will continue to build on our mission to help veterans connect with who and what matters most.

MobilityWorks has more than 50 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Minivans, full-size vans and trucks
- The latest in adaptive technology
- Complete maintenance and service
- Rental vans — veterans receive a 10% discount

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Norwood, MA 02062
781-222-3622

Essex Junction
5C David Drive
Essex Junction, VT 05452
802-222-0265

North Attleboro
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- And much more!



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- Provide one-on-one guidance to help you find **meaningful employment**.
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- Teach you how to build an effective LinkedIn profile page.
- Practice mock interviews to hone your skills before you interact with employers.
- Regularly communicate with you to track progress and identify other resources to assist in the job search process.
- Be a **Partner for Life** to assist you for the duration of your career.

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Member Individual Allotment Policy

Member Individual Allotment Program

The Individual Allotment (IA) Program's purpose is to improve the quality of life of New England PVA's members by assisting in the expansion of both the quality and quantity of opportunities in sports, recreation, events and entertainment, especially those activities which enhance lifetime health and fitness, both physical and mental.

IA Funding Availability

The Chapter annually budgets for IA requests based on its fiscal funds available. The amount budgeted may vary from year-to-year based on these funds and its availability is not guaranteed. The budgeted amount is drawn down against on a first-come-first-served basis by BOD approved Individual Funding Requests. Once these funds have been depleted, no more Individual Funding Requests will be accepted for the current Fiscal year.

IA Funding Amount(s)

The maximum total amount allowable per individual per fiscal year is \$750. This amount may be drawn against cumulatively, as separate funding requests submitted throughout the year, or entirely through a single funding request. An individual may not request funding above the maximum amount allowable for the fiscal year.

IA Program Minimum Eligibility Participation Requirements

1. Must be a New England Chapter member in Good Standing;
2. Must receive Annual SCI/D physical at the West Roxbury, MA, VAMC SCI Center in accordance with VHA Handbook 1176.01.
3. Must not have any outstanding receipts, funds, materials or equipment due to the Chapter at the time of request.

IA Request Submission Procedure

All (IA) requests shall be submitted in writing a minimum of 30 days prior to the event, function or trip requested for use. The Request should be as detailed as possible, with regard to the activity and intended use of the requested funds. Requests may be either a written letter of request mailed to the Chapter office at 1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301, West Roxbury, MA 02132, Attention: Individual Allotment Request or email to info@newenglandpva.org, with "Individual Allotment Request" in the subject line.

IA requests received after the event, function or trip has occurred will not be accepted or considered for reimbursement.

IA Eligibility Review

Requests will be reviewed by Chapter administration to determine if the applicant is eligible for IA and what level of funding is available to the applicant at the time of request. Those applicants meeting the IA eligibility requirements, with funds available, will have their IA request forwarded to the BOD for review.

IA Funding Approval Process

All IA requests received by the BOD will be individually reviewed and discussed by the BOD for approval consideration. The BOD has sole discretion and authority to approve, deny or modify any IA request, in whole or in part, for any reason they determine to do so.

Receipt of IA Funding

IA Funding is based on the reimbursement of an individual's expenses as detailed in their IA Funding Request. Actual reimbursement(s) will only be provided for expenses submitted with a corresponding receipt. Reimbursement(s) will not exceed the amount initially requested in the Funding Request or the amount approved by the BOD, if the BOD approved an amount less than the initial amount requested.

Under no circumstance will any IA funds be distributed or release to an individual in advance of receiving the required expense receipts or required Newsletter article.

Required Newsletter Article

In addition to submitting the required receipts for reimbursement, the IA recipient is also required to compose and submit a minimum 500 word article, with pictures, about the event or activity the IA funding was use for. This article will be provided to the CordWord Editor for publishing consideration.

IA funding will not be approved for disbursement prior to receiving this required article.

IA Program's usage for Sports Clinics - As long as funding is available, the Chapter will continue to cover the expense of one half the room rate for members participating in the New England Winter Sports Clinic, New England Summer Sports Clinic, and the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Since the Chapter is covering the participant's portion of the room cost, participants may not request IA funding for the purpose of applying it to the other half of the room cost.

be there.

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Suicide Prevention Month.*

BeThereForVeterans.com

www.newenglandpva.org

SEPTEMBER MEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

September 1

James L. Haskins
Michael R. Beauregard

Peter H. Bleau
Marsha A. Kelly
Jennifer E. Green

Joseph P. Colby
Garry E. Tillson
Brian S. Checkett

September 21

Russell E. Schaff, II
Steven M. Kopka
Higinio Laureano
Peter J. Ricotta

September 29

Lawrence F. Daley
Steven R. Chartier

September 2

Timothy J. Ahern
Albert J. Maberry
Douglas E. Norvell
Riza P. Turkson
Walter F. Petig, Jr.
Michael E. Moran

September 8

Roger R. Ledoux
Paul C. Pescarmona
Christopher E. Geckler
James P. Crosby

September 15

George D. Iverson
Gary T. Kolesar
Tamara L. Fee
Jennifer L. Russell

September 24

David M. Bishop
Bryan R. Nutting
David M. Oates

September 30

Abdul Pearson
Steven M. Dunwoody

September 4

Robert W. Richard
Alicia M. Stewart

September 9

Stephen T. Staples
Timothy J. Beaton
Rachel S. Putnam

September 16

Leslie F. Hildreth
Thomas V. Sawyer

September 25

Marguerite R. Weaver
Christopher D. Barber

September 5

Mark L. Calchera
Joseph A. Rocca
James T. Howard
Karen W. Bottary

September 10

Preston C. Wheaton

September 17

Paul S. Moore

September 26

Joseph E. Mousseau
Mark E. Sanders
Oliver C. Allen, Jr.
Bradley T. Mozuch
Claudia C. Inverso

September 11

Robert L. Hill
Daniel R. Handy, Sr.
Robert E. Buzby

September 18

Henry W. Bonk
John A. Rogers

September 19

Malcolm R. Smith
Jeffrey P. Kimball

September 27

Clarence W. Dyer

September 6

Raymond E. Thompson
Carl J. Schoener
Donald W. Hume
Darrell L. Tolman

September 12

Philip D. Cournoyer
Thomas K. Gehan

September 20

Albert J. Kolesinski
Gary A. Jezierski

September 28

James C. Barnes
John E. Brault
Bruce J. Andrade

September 7

September 13

Bernice H. Pacitto

Do You Have a Mask?

via www.myhealth.va.gov



Face coverings or masks now required at all VA facilities

All VA facilities require the use of face coverings or masks for all patients, families, staff, and volunteers. The health and safety of Veterans, and the staff who care for them, is and always has been VA's top priority.

CORDWORD

During the coronavirus pandemic, we're all trying to do our part and help stop the spread of COVID-19. Whether it's social distancing, washing our hands, or cleaning surfaces, we're trying to protect ourselves and stay healthy.

We recommend you bring your own face covering, such as a cloth mask or scarf. This is required for all patients and families in public and administrative areas of facilities. If you don't have a face covering, ask a staff member, and they will provide you with one. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers [helpful guides](#) on making suitable masks at home for personal use.

If you have non-urgent medical concerns, schedule an appointment with your health care team through [VA Video Connect](#). This tool allows Veterans at home to meet with VA health care providers through live video on any computer, tablet, or mobile device with an Internet connection.



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To always get the most timely Sports and Activities Information please visit the
Chapter website at www.newenglandpva.org
or email Sports Director Mike Guilbault at rollingilbo@newenglandpva.org



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