



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

New England Chapter

CORDWORD

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



Kancamagus Hwy, NH

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SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS

ACCESS TO VA CARE



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Protecting Yourself Against Social Media Scams

Online scams can affect Veterans, their families, and anyone using social media platforms—and that’s an estimated 3.6 billion potential victims. Social media scams are becoming more common in this digital age, so it’s important that you know how to recognize them and protect yourself.

Scammers are persistent. They try to build a sense of trust by [...continued on page 8.](#)



4 Ways VA is Improving Access to Care in 2020

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We focus on making it easier for Veterans to see their doctors and get to their medical appointments year after year. Not only does this result in better health for millions of America’s heroes, but it improves [...continued on page 14.](#)

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of America**

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

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ON THE COVER: A scenic view overlooking the rolling landscape of New Hampshire's Kancamagus Highway.

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

One last look at the fall foliage on the cover of this issue of the Cord Word. The leaves are steadily dropping and so is the temperature outside. With the cold weather also comes the flu season, which is now compounded with the addition of COVID-19. Its even more important this year to get your flu shot. As I wrote last month, there are a variety of ways to get your flu shot. In addition to the VA, there available at a number of community care pharmacies and immediate care providers. If seeking to get your flu shot in the community, please first check the VA's website (<https://www.va.gov/communitycare/flushot.asp>) to locate a nearby participating provider, as not all do participate in the program. One pharmacy we were made aware that's not participating this year is Walgreens.

As of this issue COVID-19 cases are on the rise again in New England. The CDC states one of the best practices to [prevent the spread of COVID-19 is to wear a face mask or covering](#). The Chapter is providing its membership with FREE Chapter branded face masks and neck gaiters. If you would like to receive a pair of each, turn to [page 22](#) for details on how to request these and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Mark Murphy and I will be "virtually" attending this year's PVA Fall Board of Directors meeting. It will be held via Zoom, as was the Annual Convention, this October 19th thru 23rd. In addition to approving PVA's annual budget, there will be several important resolutions coming before the Board at this meeting. One resolution reduces/restructures PVA's eight mandated Chapter programs and another lengthens the terms for elected members of PVA's Executive Committee. Look to next month's issue of the Cord Word for a complete meeting report, including the resolutions that were adopted.

Speaking of Board meetings, if any Chapter member is interested in "virtually" attending the local Chapter monthly Board of Directors meeting, simply send an email to info@newenglandpva.org requesting a "BOD Meeting Invite". For complete details about the requesting an invite and meeting info turn to [page 22](#).

Wrapping up, I want to share with you the significance of October to me. October represents two significant life altering experiences in my life. The first, by choice, was stepping onto those infamous "yellow footprints" in San Diego and joining the eternal brotherhood of the Marine Corps. Although my family has a long and rich history of serving in the military that stretches back to World War I, I was the first in my family to earn the Eagle, Globe and Anchor. It is an honor and privilege for me, like all Marines, which can never be taken away and will carry until their dying days. Marines use the words camaraderie and brotherhood to describe their relationships. It is something we deeply share regardless of age, race, sex or religion. Although I've also served in the Coast Guard, a graduate of the Air Force NCO Academy, and spent a year at Naval Electronic Warfare school, there exists an Esprit de corps within the Marines I've not found in any of the other branches. It is this sense of Esprit de corps that connects the generations of Marines, past and present. It is this and the foundation of lessons learned in the Marines that shaped parts of my life at an early age, and which still guides me today.

The second event, by accident, was joining another distinct group - those who had sustaining catastrophic spinal cord injuries. Suffering a C4-C6 SCI definitely was a life changing experience for both me, and those closest to me. As most of you know, living with a SCI presents its challenges, but its how we confront and overcome these challenges that determines our paths forward. Just as in the Marines, those of us living with SCIs share a very real common experience that no others can fully understand or appreciate without joining themselves. Its also these shared experiences that uniquely bond us to one another.

Unbeknownst to me years later, these two life changing events combined would prepare me in my journey to and for my current role - serving fellow Veterans with spinal cord injuries and disease. Being able to tangibly enrich and impact the lives of those who have giving a part of their lives in service to our country is simply immeasurable. More importantly, beyond my service to our fellow veterans, is yours. Each Chapter member reading this has experienced both military service and a SCI/D, which has uniquely equipped you with experiences which can be applied in serving, in helping, other Veterans facing the same challenges. It doesn't matter whether the action you take is big or small, just that you take some action.

To quote again, World War II Navy Veteran Leo Buscaglia - "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." In these poignant times we are each navigating, consider Leo's thought as you make way through this journey called life and the impact you have on others.

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

From the Director's Desk

Mark Murphy, Chapter Executive Director

With the Fall season now upon us, the leaves are changing, and the weather is getting cooler. This is always one of my favorite times of the year, so I hope we can enjoy it for a little bit longer before the Winter comes! While the seasons are changing, one current constant is the reality of COVID-19 and the circumstances surrounding the pandemic, which still looms large over much of my day-to-day work in the Chapter. Amid the many challenges our members and Chapter have experienced because of the pandemic, I am happy to report that there have been some bright shining examples of hope as well. Our COVID-19 Relief Member Grant Program that we started during the Summer has been enormously well received and successful. We were happy to award 22 grants to members in need, and some of the expressed needs for funding included struggles with food insecurity, inability to pay for basic living expenses, PPE/cleaning supplies, and transportation costs. I am very proud of the way in which this grant program was a direct way to reach and help our members in their time of need during the pandemic.



In addition to our COVID-19 Relief Member Grant Program, we have also been sending free masks and neck gaiters branded with the New England PVA logo for members of the Chapter who request them. As of the writing of this column, I have shipped masks to over 50 of our members. It is our hope that these masks and face coverings will be protective for you in your home or if you are going out. Branded with the New England PVA logo, they also raise great awareness for our Chapter throughout the region. 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.

Our Chapter's positive responses to the reality of the pandemic and its effect on our members would not have been possible if not for the generous grants we received from various foundations in New England who recognized our varied financial needs as a non-profit organization during these difficult times. Let me once again thank the Boston Resiliency Fund, the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, the Vermont Community Foundation, and the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation. We are incredibly grateful for their financial support, and the grant funding is certainly being put to good use!

I wanted to mention that on Tuesday, September 29th, I participated in a VSO and VA update Webex conference call moderated by Mr. Vincent Ng, Director of the VA Boston Healthcare System. One of the highlights of the call included guidance on flu shot clinics throughout the VA. With flu season upon us, this is very important for our members. More information on the VA flu shot clinics can be found at: https://www.boston.va.gov/Flu_Shot_Clinics.asp

Finally, next month on November 11th we of course celebrate Veterans Day in our country. Each year as we approach Veterans Day I remind myself that this important holiday is distinct from Memorial Day as it is day where we celebrate the service of all United States military veterans, while Memorial Day honors those who had died while in military service. In that vein, let me take this time to wish all our members and supporters who served in the military a very happy and healthy Veterans Day.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Murphy".

Mark Murphy
Chapter Executive Director



From the Hill

Kristen McCone Gordon, Chapter Government Relations Director

I always find election season to be an interesting and exciting time in our country. I love how people who may typically shy away from politics become engaged. Everywhere you go, there is passionate conversation among friends, family, and neighbors about the issues facing our lives and communities. Even if it's fleeting, there seems to be a

palpable commitment by all during the lead up to a Presidential election to make our country the best it can be.

This election season feels different. The stakes are higher. The rhetoric more divisive, even dangerous. Relationships between friends, families, and neighbors are being tested over disagreements about the best way forward.

Like many of you, I feel very strongly about what the right direction is for our country. I mailed in my ballot earlier this week with great eagerness, pride, and hope. Whomever you support, whatever your feelings are on either candidate, I hope you vote too.

PVA hosts webinar on voting during COVID-19.

On October 6th, PVA hosted a live webinar for all members focusing on voting during the November 3rd presidential general election. For those unable to attend, the webinar was recorded and will be available on PVA's website. Members will learn how to make a plan to safely and securely cast a ballot during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who watch the session will also hear how the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) works to ensure states and local precincts meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Help America Vote Act.

Connecticut's 2020 Candidates' Forum on Disability Issues.

On behalf of NEPVA, I participated in a non-partisan forum with candidates (or their surrogates) running for President of the United States and United States Congress. Candidates answered questions on disability topics that include employment, transportation, housing, health care and other related issues. Among the current New England Delegation, Congressman Himes, Congressman Courtney, Congressman Larson, and Congresswoman DeLauro attended.

New Hampshire Gubernatorial Town Hall on Disability Issues.

On October 13th, I'll be participating in the NH Gubernatorial Town Hall on disability issues. The two candidates, Governor Chris Sununu and Senator Dan Feltes will present their disability policy platforms and discuss the specific disability issues each would focus on if elected. They will also answer disability specific questions from the zoom audience. Information on how to join the zoom Town Hall was emailed to all NH NEPVA residents earlier this week. I hope many of you are able to join me!

NEPVA briefings with the New England Congressional Delegation.

This past month, I had the opportunity to discuss PVA's 2020 Legislative Priorities with the district staff of the following offices: Senator Blumenthal, Senator Hassan, and Congressman McGovern. I continue to raise, among other issues, 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. The staff members were very responsive and I look forward to following up with them in the coming weeks.

As always, I'd like to hear from you. What issues matter most to you in this election? What do you wish your Representative would pursue? What obstacles do you and your family face that you would like our legislative officials to be aware of? You can reach me at kristen@newenglandpva.org or 800-660-1181.





I am writing to inform those who may not know the sad news that our Chapter and NEHSA lost a great volunteer and friend when September 4th Chris 'Shrek' Zenaro suddenly passed away. Many members who have attended the Winter and Summer Sports Clinics along with many other NEHSA events will know Chris. He and wife Veronica were the captains of the Hawks team at the Summer Sports Clinic held Annually for so many years and always present at most every NEHSA event.

Always loved by everyone he worked with and especially loved by the children that got out skiing with the NESHA programs. 'Shrek' was an awesome example of what an impact a volunteer can have in the lives of the less abled. One could not spend time with him without getting plenty of laughs and wearing a permanent smile because of the joy he brought to them all. A big strong man he was often assigned to ski with some of the larger skiers at our January ski clinic and all who got to ski with him sure had some great runs all over the mountain and plenty of speed if they desired, he was an amazing skier and a quite fit individual. I know he was also called on to take out VIPs and dignitaries who would attend events and chose to try skiing our way by getting in a bucket and being taken for a ride, I have no doubt they thoroughly enjoyed their runs and wore the same smiles as every other skier Chris would work with. Spending plenty of time skiing, hiking and kayaking with his wife I was shocked to hear the news. I will never get the chance to see him again and that is heartbreaking!



A gentle giant with a great heart who would always do anything to assist in any way possible. My sympathies go out to Vee, the family, all his dear

In Remembrance of Chris 'Shrek' Zenaro

By Mike Guilbault, Chapter VP & Sports Director

friends in the NEHSA family and anyone who's life he touched and made brighter just by being in it. Being a smaller individual, I was never lucky enough to get to ski with Chris yet spent plenty of time eating his grilled food. Always the willing cook and even transporting his own grill to feed us well whether it be at the NEHSA Skiathon, the Veterans Welcome Home Days or some of the different Race Days held at Mount Sunapee everyone ate well. Chris was a true grill master and made sure there was plenty of good hot food fresh off the grill for those present to fuel up on. I was lucky enough to call him a friend and shared a beer or two at our après play gatherings, he was always very pleasant and told great stories to keep you laughing. Another of his strengths was he constantly came up with solutions to problems, if someone was having troubles with equipment Chris would discuss it with others and before you knew it he'd have come up with a solution, hence no more problem, even if he had to go make something to help solve and fix the problem.



A NEHSA volunteer for so many years I cannot remember him not being around and I have been involved since our very first WSC over 20+ years ago! Chris was a shining star who brightened the lives of everyone who ever got to spend time with the big hearted, gentle giant 'Shrek' Zenaro. An avid fisherman it was he and the group of anglers he went salmon fishing with that found a guide and boat who would take out wheelchairs on the Salmon River so some of us in wheelchairs could also get up there and catch salmon too. Each year he went up to wade the river fly fishing for salmon with a group including some other NEHSA volunteers. He never went up to the Salmon River in Upstate, NY without stopping to visit the one and only Mark Kline who is a regular at the WSC. A true example of what a kind, generous and caring man Chris was. He was a great example of what a good person truly is! Never one to want attention or recognition, just happy to be able to make others happy and he did that so well. I was so pleased to see him win Instructor of the Year at the 2020 Winter Sports Clinic, so well deserved. A genuine great man taken from us all way too soon, I'm sure if you're on Facebook you may already know; yet, I barely ever get on FB so was contacted by a mutual friend and ski buddy and told the news. A great loss to so many, Chris, your spirit will live on in the lives of anyone who has ever had the pleasure to meet and spend time with you. RIP my friend.

Protecting Yourself Against Social Media Scams

By Jennifer Deen, Sarah Moffat via VAntage Point

Online scams can affect Veterans, their families, and anyone using social media platforms—and that’s an estimated 3.6 billion potential victims. Social media scams are becoming more common in this digital age, so it’s important that you know how to recognize them and protect yourself.

Scammers are persistent. They try to build a sense of trust by showing victims proof that others have done what they asked and received payment – but the reality is that it’s all fake. You can better protect yourself from becoming a victim by understanding what to look out for.

For example, [VA’s Million Veteran Program \(MVP\)](#) recently received reports from several individuals who were contacted by a scammer through their social media accounts. The scammer showed victims the MVP website and attempted to solicit money with the promise of sending them a larger amount in return. Scams like these are common, but if you recognize the signs you can easily determine when someone is trying to scam you.

Here are some other examples of social media scams:

- In one instance, a message told the individual to buy gift cards and send them to the scammer and receive \$2,400 for doing it.
- In another, individuals were asked to send \$100 via a money transfer app, and they would receive \$1,200 in return.

Bottom line: Trust your gut. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is! It’s important to be diligent with your information; never send money or private information, including passwords, to anyone that you don’t know.

As a reminder, MVP uses multiple security and privacy layers ensuring participating Veterans’ data is safe, secure, and helping improve future Veteran health care.

VA Resumes In-Person Benefits Services Halted by the COVID-19 Response

VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today the reestablishment of in-person benefits services in select locations throughout the country.

Currently, there are 11 regional offices (RO) open to the public and more are expected to reopen in the coming weeks as reopening phases will vary by RO and local conditions.

“During the last few months, VA regional offices continued performing our essential mission virtually — to provide benefits to Veterans and eligible family members,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “We have robust safety measures in place that will allow us to resume in-person services while protecting the health and safety of Veterans, their families and our team



If a Veteran or their family member feels their information was compromised through a scam, contact VA’s ID Theft helpline at 1-855-578-5492 or visit [VA’s Identity Theft page](#) for more information.

The [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#) also provides great practical tips on avoiding being a victim of fraud by spotting potential scams. You can report scams online through FTC’s Complaint Assistant website and help the FTC and others investigate and hold those responsible accountable.

Jennifer Deen is a health science specialist with the Million Veteran Program at VA’s Office of Research and Development. Sarah Moffat is the enterprise cybersecurity awareness and training director VA’s Enterprise Cybersecurity Awareness & Communications office. Crystal Drakeford is a senior government information specialist at VA Privacy Service, Office of Information and Technology.

members who serve them.”

ROs will continue adherence to [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) guidelines which includes the use of social distancing, face coverings, hand sanitizer and asking sick individuals to stay at home.

Veterans can continue to interact with the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) virtually for accessing benefits information [online](#) or when [filing a claim online](#). For claim-specific questions call 1-800-827-1000. To check the availability of an RO near you, visit [VA benefits offices](#).

VBA’s return to normal, pre-COVID-19 public-facing operations align with White House guidelines for re-opening. Read more about our [response](#) to COVID-19.

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Retired Army Sergeant Terry Vereline crosses the finish line of the 2019 New York City Marathon after walking 26.2 miles in her ReWalk Exoskeleton. She received this device in 2014 and has used it to take nearly 1,000,000 steps in the past five years.

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Veterans: Exercise Online at Your Pace on Your Schedule

via VAntage Point

Over 4000 Veterans have benefited from the program

Serving over 4,200 Veterans within the last year alone, the Gerofit program provides supervised exercise to Veterans across 17 VA health care systems.

Many of these VA facilities offer onsite Gerofit programs where Veterans can exercise alongside other Veterans and work with trained professionals who will help them develop an exercise plan specific to their abilities and goals.

Some programs offer the ability to connect and exercise virtually – from the comfort of the Veteran’s own home. All that is required to participate is a smart device (laptop, computer with webcam, smartphone, tablet) and an internet connection.

Search #GerofitExercise on VA’s YouTube page

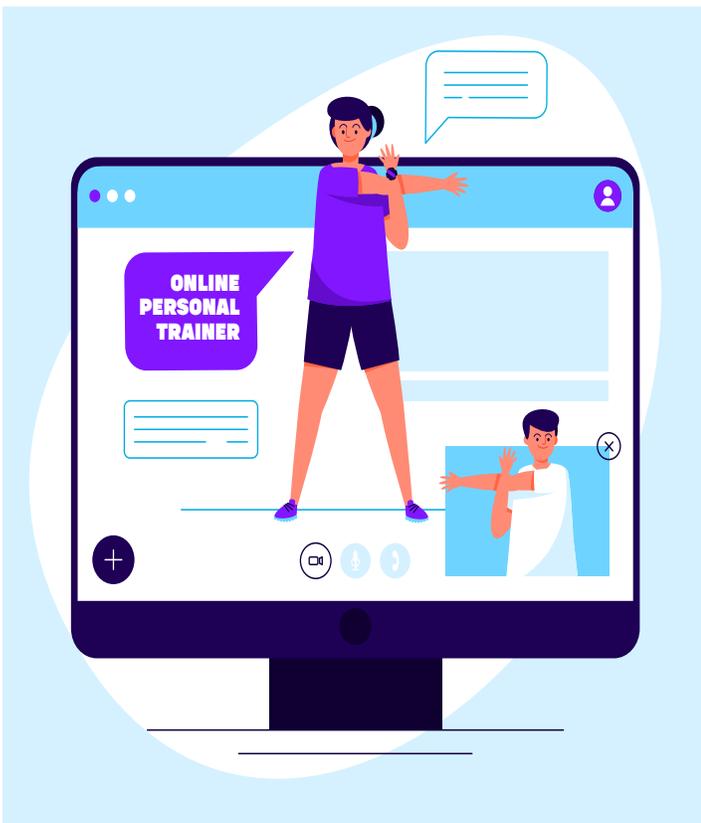
The Gerofit Program has developed several videos available 24-hours a day.

Anyone with access to the Internet can go online to visit the [Veterans Health Administrations channel YouTube page](#). Just search #GerofitExercise in the YouTube search bar.

The videos vary from short stretching and cardio routines to full-body routines, appropriate for varying abilities and comfort levels. Safe and challenging, Veterans can even do these exercises entirely from the chair.

Learning more about Gerofit

Click [here](#) for a short video about sharing more about Gerofit. [Learn about](#) the importance of exercise to maintain physical function and find great resources that can help achieve it.



Exercise is important for individuals of all abilities. Even a few minutes of activity a day provides both physical and mental health benefits.

Many people struggle with maintaining exercise habits due to a lack of knowledge about the type and safety of exercises, accountability or fear of injury.

Did you know there is a program that already exists to help Veterans overcome these barriers? It’s [GEROFIT](#).

Originating from VA’s Geriatric Research, Education & Clinical Center (GRECC) in Durham, NC, Gerofit is a personalized exercise program developed specifically for older Veterans.

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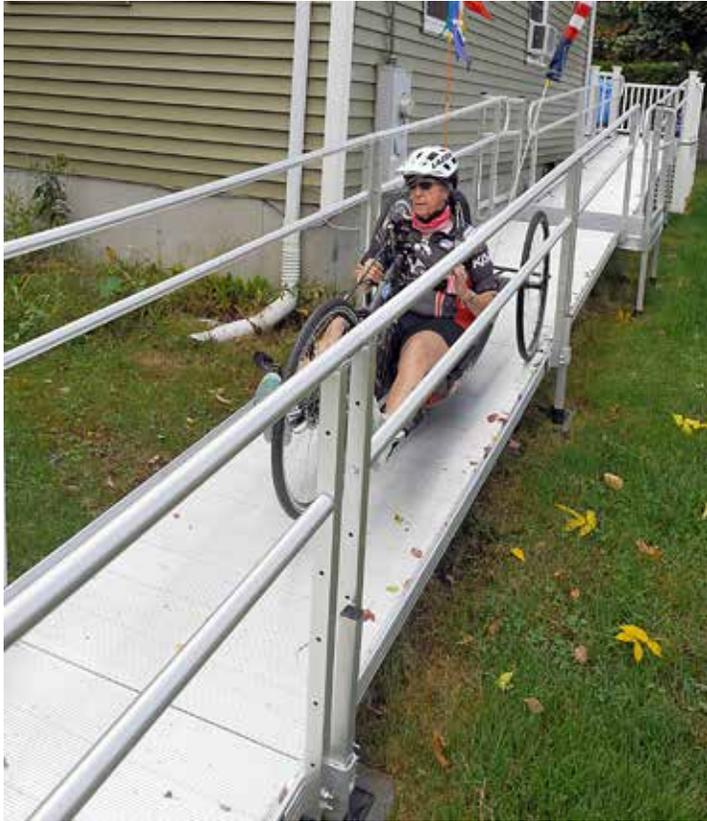
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is a life-long partner and
advocate for veterans and
all people with disabilities.

pva.org/Unstoppable

Paralyzed Veterans
of America
New England Chapter

Riding Away the Pain

By Chapter member Debra A. Freed (Metro West Daily News article 10.4.2020)



Before I explain why I am thanking folks, I want to ensure a proper thank you. Thank you Mr. Art Illman for the photos and permissions. Thank you Ms. Jeannette Hinkle for writing it all up, doing a great job, and getting permissions as well. Thank you Metro West Daily News for publishing it. The article can be found on: <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/20201003/this-framingham-veteran-has-pedaled-hundreds-of-miles-on-her-handcycle-since-pandemic-began-heres-why>.

Many of you know that I have been handcycling this Spring and Summer. Because of C-19, any Challenges or Races that I was to take part in, of course, were cancelled. But where there is a will, there is always a way to make things happen. I started riding in early March to start training for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) that would have been held in Portland, Oregon. The handcycle/recumbent race was changed this year from a 10K to a 20K. Again, because of Covid, the VA and its partner PVA went virtual. NVWG at Home with a very different cycle event. It would be 31 days and start June 15th and end July 15th.

Because of Covid, all other physical activities were on hold until further notice. So, I went online to see what other Challenges there were and signed up for several. However, The New England Road Map Challenge would give runners/hikers/walkers the opportunity to choose 7 different routes - going from one state capitol to the next or doing all six New England Capitals. I chose the big one – 716 miles. I asked if I could participate using a handcycle. The sponsors of the Challenge were really great and added a wheelchair division to sign in. Doing the 716 would start Aug 10 and run through Dec 31. Mike Guilbault is also doing the Challenge but from Montpelier, VT to Augusta, ME – 180 miles. While he started well after I did,

he will finish before the end of October.

Because of where I live, I can cross the street, ride a half mile or so and I am in Cushing Memorial Park (former home of one of the original VAMCs) that housed spinal cord injured WWII veterans. The rules of the park are bikes are allowed, but no racing. I call this my New York City Block because staying on the perimeter, it is just over 2 miles around. I worked my way up to doing 8 times around which gets me 20 miles give or take in less than 2.5 hours.

On or about the 21 of September, (one year to the day of my new back injury) I was riding down Dudley Road heading towards Dr. Harvey Cushing Rd. Riding this way requires that I either make a sharp right to stay on to the sidewalk or go across Harvey Cushing heading towards my street. There is a stop sign and cross walk on Harvey Cushing but most folks roll through the crosswalk. On one of my rounds, heading down Dudley Road, there was a small SUV coming towards the stop sign. The driver was slowing down so I cut across Harvey Cushing and wave and say thanks. The driver puts down his window and at first I thought he wanted to know where the MWDN office was. No! He, Mr. Art Illman is a photojournalist with the MWDN. He asked if he could take a few photos. Hey, why not. It was a beautiful day. We went back to the parking lot. Mr. Illman said he had just come from the park but it was pretty quiet until I come “out of nowhere!”

After several photos, he thanked me for my time and went on his way. The MWDN publishes photos with just captions, so I figured that is what would happen. I sent Mr. Illman an email later that day if he wanted to include some of what I wrote in the caption. We do get the Metro West Daily News in paper so I checked every day, no photo. The following Monday, I received a call from Ms. Jeannette Hinkle, a reporter for the MWDN. They wanted to do more than just a photo and caption. I bent that poor woman’s ear for over 2 hours. She is a great listener. Mr. Illman came back for a few more photos for the paper and said he thought the article would come out in Sunday’s paper 10.4.2020.

And so it did: Riding Away the Pain and a photo were on the lower front page of the October 4th paper. To our great surprise, opening to page 6, it was almost an entire page. See, I told you I bent that poor woman’s ear! Ms. Hinkle and Mr. Illman did a truly great job. Not only does it promote handcycling for those who cannot ride a regular bike. It also promotes PVA Racing!

Finally, as other avenues of exercise were and still are closed to me, riding allows me to remain active, social distance from others, and it really does “Ride Away the Pain!”

PVA WASHINGTON UPDATE

PVA Washington Update Volume 26, Number 17

Efforts Continue to Permanently Authorize IVF

On August 18, House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Health Subcommittee Chairwoman Julia Brownley introduced H.R. 8034, the "[Veterans Infertility Treatment Act of 2020](#)," a bill aimed at addressing veteran infertility. Similar to H.R. 955/S. 319, the "[Women Veterans and Families Health Service Act of 2019](#)," this new legislation would make permanent fertility services at VA. H.R. 8034 would open Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART), like IVF, to any veteran using VA health care. It would also repeal the ban on donated gametes and embryos, require reporting to Congress on services rendered, and direct research on infertility among veterans.

In addition to this legislation, language was included in the House's MILCON/VA appropriations bill that would require VA to develop its own guidance on ART, consider inclusion of gestational surrogacy, and report on ART services provided by VA, including those who have been denied those services. A blanket authorization for IVF and other VA authorized ART services continues on a year by year basis and funding would continue through the end of Fiscal Year 2021.

Other bills addressing veteran infertility include H.R. 2803/S.1461, the "[Access to Infertility Treatment and Care Act](#)," which focuses on the provision of fertility preservation, counseling, and ART to those with iatrogenic infertility. Also, H.R. 6142/S. 3424, the "[Black Maternal Health Omnibus Act of 2020](#)," would authorize funding to improve maternity care coordination at VA; require listing of veteran status of mother in fetal death records and in maternal mortality review committees of pregnancy-related deaths and pregnancy-associated deaths by state; and give the authority for a GAO report on maternal morbidity and severe maternal morbidity of veterans with ethnic and racial disparities in material health outcomes.

We continue to advocate for legislation granting permanent authorization for IVF, but as this session of Congress draws to a close, we will likely have to continue to seek legislation permanently authorizing IVF in the 117th Congress.

Save Our Social Security Now Act Focus of Ways and Means Hearing

The House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee held a hearing on September 24 on H.R. 8171, the Save Our Social Security Now Act, which would overturn the administration's directive to the Treasury Department to defer collection of Social Security payroll contributions and H.J. Res. 94, which signals congressional intent to overturn any

Treasury Department guidance implementing the deferral under the Congressional Review Act (CRA). The hearing can be viewed [here](#). PVA wrote to the House of Representatives on September 22 endorsing this legislation because of the impact payroll deferrals have on the future of Social Security benefits.

Continuing Resolution for FY 2020 Addresses Medicare Part B Premium Increase

Section 2401 of the Fiscal Year 2020 Continuing Appropriations legislation protects Medicare beneficiaries from the expected increase in Part B premiums for 2021 likely to result from the COVID-19 public health emergency and the Medicare Advance Payment program loans, which were paid from the Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund. Specifically, it holds the 2021 Part B monthly premium at the 2020 amount

for the standard premium, plus 25 percent of the difference between the 2020 amount and the preliminary monthly actuarial rate for 2021, according to models from the CMS Office of the Actuary. Beneficiaries will pay a small surcharge – equating to about \$3 for the vast majority of seniors – on the monthly premium until the SMI Trust Fund is paid back.

VBA Debt Management During COVID and Other Natural Disasters

Section 2401 of the Fiscal Year 2020 Continuing Appropriations legislation protects Medicare beneficiaries from the expected increase in Part B premiums for 2021 likely to result from the COVID-19 public health emergency and the Medicare Advance Payment program loans, which were paid from the Supplemental Medical Insurance (SMI) Trust Fund. Specifically, it holds the 2021 Part B monthly premium at the 2020 amount

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National Coalition for Accessible Voting "Plan Your Vote 2020 Guide"

PVA is part of the National Coalition for Accessible Voting. The coalition is comprised of the nation's leading disability, veterans, and civil rights organizations. We have joined our voices to advocate for accessible, remote voting for all citizens and to preserve and expand the options

granted under law for accessible, in-person voting. The coalition has produced a "Plan Your Vote 2020 Guide" to assist its members in getting out the vote. You can view the guide at the coalition website [ncavoting.org](#), then look for the box: November 2020 – how to plan your vote.

Congress Passes Legislation Authorizing VA COLA

Unlike Social Security payments and federal pensions, VA's disability and compensation programs require a special act of Congress in order to receive an annual increase. Recently, lawmakers approved legislation that will provide cost-of-living increases for wartime disability compensation; compensation for dependents; clothing allowance; dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouses; and dependency and

indemnity compensation to children. The rate of next year's increase won't be known until the Bureau of Labor Statistics announces the COLA for Social Security recipients in mid-October. Assuming there is a COLA, the higher rates would go into effect on December 1 and are payable in January 2021.

COVID-19, Social Isolation, and People with Disabilities in Rural Communities

The Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities at the University of Montana has issued a report on the impact of COVID-19

on social isolation among people with disabilities. The report is available [here](#).

COVID-19 Research Study

A [research study](#) is being conducted on the impact of COVID-19 on travel behavior and the daily activities of older adults and people with disabilities. The survey consists of questions about (1) overall travel behavior by trip purpose, (2) perception of using different transportation

modes, and (3) access to technology and the usage of delivery services and takes about 20-25 minutes to complete. Participants will be entered into a drawing with a chance to win a \$50 gift card. To participate in this research study click [here](#).

House passage of S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019

House passage of S. 785, the [Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019](#), a \$277 million veteran suicide prevention legislative package which is now on its way to the President's desk for signature. This comprehensive legislation includes provisions such as providing health care to all veterans for the year following their transition from the military, authorizing a grant program for organizations to provide suicide prevention services to veterans and their family members, reducing the shortage of VA mental health staff, and multiple studies and pilots aimed at specific populations of veterans.

Both Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairmen Jerry Moran and Mark Takano have promised that the passage of S. 785 does not mean the work on mental health is done. Chairman Moran has committed to considering House passed legislation focused on suicide prevention. They have also both promised to continue to work to bring legislation aimed at improving mental health care and resources for veterans in the 117th session of Congress.





4 Ways VA is Improving Access to Care in 2020

via VAntage Point

a website that shows how quickly Veterans can expect to be seen, satisfaction with care, comparisons between facilities and more.

Our data-driven approach first started out by looking at wait times, but we've cast a wider net.

In a recent roundtable discussion, participants agreed that other important metrics to focus on include coordination and continuity of care, quality of care, compassion of care, and whether their needs were met in a timely manner.

"It's fair to say that VHA is a leader in assuring timely access to care through a coordinated combination of virtual and in-person care," said roundtable participant Susan Kirsh, M.D., VA's acting assistant deputy under secretary for health for access to care.

Offering transportation to VA facilities.

It can be hard for some Veterans to travel to their appointments due to age, illness, disability or location.

The Veterans Transportation Service (VTS) can provide transportation at little to no cost to many Veterans who cannot get to their appointments on their own.

VTS has established a network of transportation options in 47 states and Puerto Rico through joint efforts with VA's Office of Rural Health and other organizations.

Focusing on groups with increased access to care issues.

Veterans are a diverse group, and some have a harder time accessing care than others. We are working to meet the unique health care needs of several groups of Veterans through specific programs aimed at studying, understanding and improving their care.

Since women are the fastest growing Veteran group, we have created the Women Veterans Health Program that focuses on issues like comprehensive primary care, reproductive health and women's health education. Designated women's health providers coordinate care for female Veterans to ensure they receive equitable, timely care from a single primary care provider.

Other specialized programs have been developed for caregivers, combat Veterans, homeless Veterans, returning service members, rural Veterans, and seniors and aging Veterans.

Improved access to care results in better health for millions of America's Veterans and a better working environment for VA employees

At VA, we take pride in the high-quality care that we provide to Veterans. Ensuring they have access to that care is a critical component of the services we provide.

We focus on making it easier for Veterans to see their doctors and get to their medical appointments year after year. Not only does this result in better health for millions of America's heroes, but it improves the working environment for employees across the nation.

Here are four ways that VA is working to improve access to care in 2020:

Expanding and investing in telehealth.

We're on track to set an agency record for telehealth care this year. Prior to COVID-19, VA had a robust telehealth system in place. Nearly two-thirds of our primary care and mental health providers had seen patients over video. Because of this, we were able to quickly ramp up our telehealth capabilities to meet increased demand.

In the first half of 2020, Veterans attended about 25,000 telehealth video appointments each day, a 1,000% increase from the previous year. As of July, we had already surpassed the number of telehealth encounters in 2019 by 7 million.

Telehealth is especially beneficial for Veterans who find it difficult to travel or those who live in rural areas far from care centers.

"VA is committed to offering Veterans the health care they deserve, whenever and wherever they need it," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie in November 2019.

Tracking access to care data.

We're keeping an eye on the numbers all the time, including maintaining

Confidential help for Veterans and their families



••• Confidential chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net) or text to **838255** •••

VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Begins Expanding Eligibility to Veterans of Earlier Eras

VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs



WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today implementation of a new information technology (IT) system marking the official launch of the first phase of expansion of the [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) (PCAFC) to caregivers of eligible Veterans of earlier eras.

The Caregiver Records Management Application (CARMA) automates manual processes and integrates with other VA systems, resulting in increased efficiencies and effectiveness for VA staff.

The expansion rolls out in two phases. Effective Oct. 1, the first phase includes eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975. Effective Oct. 1, 2022, the second phase will include eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty between May 7, 1975 and Sept. 11, 2001.

Through CARMA, with a click of a button, an electronic health record will be created for a family caregiver where Caregiver Support Coordinators will document their clinical interactions. CARMA will also help guide consistency by systematically adjusting VA's stipend payment calculations, as appropriate, and alerting VA users when annual reassessments of PCAFC participants are due, among other key

functionalities. In addition, this program expansion also includes a new digital version of the application which allows individuals to apply for the [PCAFC online](#).

“Caregivers provide stability and security to our most vulnerable Veterans, allowing them to stay in their homes with their loved ones for as long as possible,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “Today begins the first phase of expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Through this expansion, VA is able to give more family caregivers access to essential resources so we can support them as they care for Veterans of earlier eras.”

Since [publishing the final regulation](#) July 31, to improve and expand PCAFC — VA also expedited hiring key staff who bring the clinical qualifications and organizational skill sets to ensure consistent eligibility decision making across the enterprise, support program needs and provide strong infrastructure for consistent and standardized application processing and adjudication.

This past year, the Caregiver Support Program expanded to approximately 1,100 staff and will grow to approximately 1,800 staff within the next six months. These changes ensure Veterans and caregivers receive timely, accurate assessments and eligibility determinations, as well as an improved customer experience.

Previously, only available for eligible Veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, PCAFC provides education, support, a monthly stipend, health care coverage and certain beneficiary travel to qualifying family caregivers of eligible Veterans.

VA's Caregiver Support Program offers a wide variety of support services for caregivers of Veterans. Partnerships continue to be created or enhanced to broaden services and supports for caregivers. Learn more by visiting the [Caregiver Support Program website](#) or by calling the Caregiver Support Line at 855-260-3274 for more information.



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



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

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.



SUVs



Trucks



Lifts and stowage products



Electronic control systems

USA's largest accessible van dealer!

Gray
32 Lewiston Road, Unit 2B
Gray, ME 04039
207-747-2064

Londonderry
54 Wentworth Avenue
Londonderry, NH 03053
603-210-4610

Norwood
333 Boston Providence Turnpike
Norwood, MA 02062
781-222-3622

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

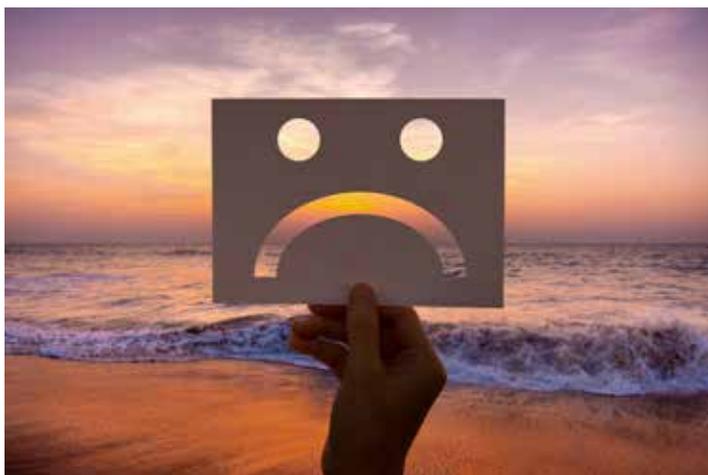
North Attleboro
57 George Leven Drive
North Attleboro MA 02760
508-859-0940

East Hartford
104 Pitkin Street
East Hartford, CT 06108
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Study: Different Emotions May Drive Male, Female Veterans to Attempt Suicide

By Mike Richman via Vantage Point



A new study finds that a much different set of emotions may have driven male and female Veterans to attempt suicide.

The [findings appeared online](#) in the journal *Social Science & Medicine* in September 2020.

In interviews with the researchers, 25 male Veterans and 25 female Veterans who had made a recent suicide attempt discussed their suicidal thoughts. In the moments before they tried taking their lives, the women recalled feeling “shameful,” “tainted,” and “worthless.” The men talked about feeling overwhelmed and remembered thinking, “it just wasn’t worth it,” “I’ve had enough,” and “screw this.”

The researchers also found that experiences related to self-concept, power, relationships, coping and stress were key contributors to the Veterans’ suicide attempts. These experiences often differed by gender.

Dr. Lauren Denneson, a specialist in social psychology and public health at the VA Portland Health Care System, led the study.

Researcher surprised by gender differences

“Our findings suggest that women and men have very different precipitating thoughts when they decide to take their own lives,” she says. “Women feel personally like they are not worth anything, and men feel like the world has sort of let them down.”

Denneson pursued the study largely because of the growing suicide rate among female Veterans and because suicide prevention research has been based mostly on men. She also felt it important to gain a better understanding of suicide risk based on the experiences of Veterans with recent suicide attempts. The results were not exactly what she expected.

“I was keeping a very open mind about whether we might see gender differences and what those differences might be,” she says. “I was surprised by how clearly different some of the experiences were by gender.”

Findings may help pinpoint treatment needs

Denneson thinks the findings may provide clinicians with a better

understanding of women Veterans who are at risk for suicide and how their treatment needs may differ from those of men. That means, for example, clinicians may take a different approach when using a psychotherapy like [cognitive behavioral therapy](#) (CBT), especially with treatment goals or suggested homework, she says. CBT, which is often used in VA, aims to change negative patterns of thinking or behavior that underlie people’s difficulties, and to improve the way they feel by challenging unhelpful thinking patterns.

“We saw how much the traumatic experiences women had in relationships, for example, through intimate partner violence and military sexual trauma, and the perceived rejection by others, played a role in their sense of worth,” Denneson says. “Given that, it seems important to increase women’s sense of self-worth to reduce their risk of suicide. But perhaps it would be most impactful if this occurred in the context of positive relationships.

“For the men, we saw how frustrated they were with the many challenges and setbacks they experienced,” she adds. “At the same time, they talked about life being pointless and not worth the struggle. So it seemed that a clearer sense of purpose might make the struggle seem more ‘worth it,’ and having successful experiences may get them closer to feeling like they’re living the life they want to live, or at least that they have the ability to get there.”

Female Veteran suicide rates on the rise

[Suicide prevention](#) is VA’s top clinical priority. The department says an average of 17 Veterans die by suicide every day. [VA’s 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report](#) notes that in 2017—the most recent year for which data are available—the suicide rate for Veterans was 1.5 times the rate for non-Veterans, after adjusting for population differences in age and sex, and 2.2 times the rate for female Veterans compared to non-Veteran women.

Plus, the suicide rate among women Veterans rose 61% between 2005 and 2017, compared with 43% for men, according to the VA report.

More Information:

Click [here](#) to read the full story.

Click [here](#) to learn more about VA research.



White River Junction Social Workers Make it Personal

By Lynne E. Davis, Communications Specialist, White River Junction VAMC

If there were a contest for the phrase of the year, 2020 would have a list of strong contenders. “Unprecedented times”, “socially distant”, and “pandemic fatigue” have become all too familiar, denoting an underlying reality of isolation and stress for many in our communities, including our Veterans.

Recognizing the likelihood of increased isolation in Veterans and aware of its potential effects, the Social Work team at the White River Junction VA (WRJ VA) wasted no time in coordinating a proactive outreach response to what could potentially become a negative situation for Veterans in our community.

Outreach initiatives: Classics make a comeback

Rather than relying solely on technology, social workers at WRJ VA implemented regular telephone outreach and even hand-written notes to make personal connections to area Veterans.

So, as social distancing catapulted to the forefront, Connie Nelson-White, LICSW, and Yael Cohn, LICSW, joined their team of Social Workers and began calling Veterans.

“When we jumped into this we were concerned about our Veterans and hoped it could help alleviate some of the worry healthcare providers might feel about their patients,” explained Nelson-White.

Veterans were receptive. “I don’t think I ever had a call where somebody said, ‘don’t call me again!’”, said Nelson-White with a laugh. They were very appreciative of the VA and grateful that someone reached out.”

“When I’m looking at our Veterans, I’m often looking at people with some complicated medical conditions. They may live alone or are caretakers for loved ones. But even without these additional challenges, they appreciate the support they feel from the call,” said Cohn.

Sometimes they learn of struggles a Veteran is having that might not become evident in a regular medical appointment or in the usual health care encounter.

“We just don’t know when we pick up the phone to call somebody what that call is going to look like and what the person will need. For some, it’s an emotional connection – sharing their story, having somebody to talk to. For others, it’s finding out about resources and how to access them,” explains Cohn.

“We do find that Veterans are very resilient overall and have found creative ways to cope with the isolation. Nevertheless, we routinely share information about our Mental Health services and various community programs so that Veterans are aware that the VA is here for them and a variety of supports exist,” says Cohn.

The outreach means a lot to United States Air Force Veteran Joseph Arsenault, who is 90 years old. Arsenault was married nearly 40 years to his beloved wife before she passed away.

“I don’t like it and try not to but sometimes I do feel lonely,” he said.

After surviving cardiac arrest, he is trying not to worry excessively through this pandemic but does take measures to stay safe. Since the pandemic started, his trips out are limited but he still goes to the cemetery to visit his wife. He was surprised to hear from Cohn, but with few social outlets he was very glad she called.

“Some days I’m just so happy to hear Yael’s voice! I wouldn’t want to lose her. We get along so well. I told her not to forget about me,” he says with a chuckle.

Caring Contacts

Thea Schlieben, LICSW, knows there’s something special about finding a handwritten letter in the mailbox. While emails and texts are convenient and useful, handwritten notes just feel more personal. This personal connection across physical distance is the goal of the Caring Contacts program.

Schlieben wanted Veterans to know that their health care team was thinking about them and still available. Worried that many people might start to feel “cut off”, she decided to design cards with inspirational quotes and a list of available resources should a Veteran need them.

“As I was designing the cards, I thought about if I were not feeling my best and needed to call someone, what would be the best number to call? What would be helpful?” explains Schlieben. “And I knew without a doubt that I wanted to include an individualized, handwritten note to each Veteran because I wanted this to be personal, genuine, and human.”

Schlieben enjoys hearing the appreciation from Veterans but it’s not why she does it.

“This is a labor of love for me. I want Veterans to know that we’re here and we’d love to hear from them if they need us.”

As the pandemic wears on, Veterans and non-Veterans alike are starting to feel the effects of social distancing and the strain of pandemic life. With the Caring Contacts program, Schlieben wants to send a personal reminder to Veterans that they are not alone, and support is available.

As one Veteran explained, “I got your card after a very tough day. You really hit me at the right time.”

While September is designated as National Suicide Prevention Month, we know that year-round, pandemic or not, feeling isolated is one of several factors that could place an individual at higher risk. There are many ways to be there for others, despite social distancing. Let’s not underestimate the power of a phone call or a personal message. For the Veteran in your life, the relative in another state, or the neighbor down the street, it is as important as ever to “be there”.

PAVE PROGRAM UPDATE

August 2020

ACCESSIBLE VOTING

Voting is one of our most important civil rights, but paralyzed veterans and other people with disabilities often face accessibility challenges at the polls.



As part of our disability rights advocacy, PVA created a guide to accessible voting that includes tips for creating a voting plan and a state-by-state early voting guide.

This information and other voting resources are online: PVA.org/vote.

SUCCESS STORY: BRANDON SOLONKA

U.S. Air Force veteran Brandon Solonka reached out to the PAVE program shortly before the Fall 2020 semester of school started. He has a B.A. in History and was working as an environmental geologist, but his service-connected disability made it necessary for him to transition to a new career.



Brandon wanted to pursue a Master's in Computer Science. Not only does the field appeal to him and present a viable career path with his disability, but he could also combine his passion for geology with computer science to build computer programs to search for things in the earth.

PAVE counselor Joel Hoots worked with Brandon to prepare a plan to apply for VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) financing to support this career shift. They gathered a great amount of information for the VR&E proposal including employment statistics, paid-internship opportunities, and labor market statistics which showed that Brandon's plan was workable and would improve his quality of life. Because he was so well prepared for his first meeting with the VR&E counselor, he was able to attain financing for school.

Brandon has been accepted to Arizona State University and is currently taking several undergraduate classes to satisfy prerequisites on the path to his Master's degree. PAVE staff will stay in touch with Brandon to support future career goals.

Read Brandon's full story [here](#).

IMPACT + OPPORTUNITIES

31 Client Placements

- 24 Paid Employment Opportunities
- 6 Training Opportunities
- 1 Volunteer Opportunity



183 Total Placements through August

CLIENT PROFILE

26 Veterans/Transitioning Service Members

5 Family Members

2 PVA Members and 1 Member- Eligible



ON LABOR DAY, TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT VETERANS EMPLOYMENT

The current economic recession has disrupted the work lives of millions of people, including veterans with disabilities. Employment statistics show that employment of veterans with disabilities often lags behind those of veterans without disabilities. PVA has been steadfast in advocating for the employment rights of these veterans and providing guided employment support through PAVE.

In a Labor Day blog, PAVE Director Lauren Lobrano and Associate Legislative Director Maureen Elias wrote about the many benefits of employing veterans with disabilities and how we are assisting them. Read the full blog [here](#).



PAVE
Paving Access for Veterans Employment

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of America

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Paving Access for Veterans Employment

Employment Support for ALL Veterans

With PAVE, Paralyzed Veterans of America's Employment Program,

You Will:

- Receive carefully tailored **one-on-one support** from a PAVE team member.
- Set goals to achieve your career objective.
- Learn how to craft an effective resume and cover letter specific to your career interests.
- Develop effective interview and communication skills so you are confident in interviews.
- Craft job search strategies to meet your employment goals.
- Create an effective LinkedIn profile.
- Identify and engage in networking opportunities in your community.
- And much more!



We Will:

- Provide one-on-one guidance to help you find **meaningful employment**.
- Guide you through development and enhancement of your resume and cover letter.
- Assess your current abilities, training, and experience and help you identify career goals.
- 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.

pva.org/pave • info@pva.org •  ParalyzedVeterans •   PVA1946

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](#).



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



Turn Your Used Vehicle Into Support for Paralyzed Veterans of America



OCTOBER MEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Victor Alarcon	Joseph R Gary	Dean G Monos	Louis W Schneider
Erasto C. Bentick	Donald W Gokey	Maurice E Morgan	Lloyd E Seemann
Bruce D Blanchard	Robert B Hauger	Declan J Murphy	Neil R Sigler
Thomas A Bolton	Charles E Hopkins	Paul J Nyerick	Daniel Silva
Curtis Bosworth	Dannie K Hosick	Manuel J Pacheco	James M Silver
Lawrence R Burbridge	Terry J Howard	Ryland M Page	Edward D Slattery
Robert E Burren	Betsy A Jarmolowicz	Lisa L Paine	Sherrie E Smith-Dunston
Bruce D Caldwell	Ralph R Jerry	Daniel J Paradis	Ronald A Sorg
Howard D Campbell	Victoria A Jones	Ronald A Parsons	Craig A Souza
John H Carlson	George R Jupin	Peter J Paulousky	Roger L Springstead
Alfred J Casey	Richard Lafontaine	Thomas B Peyton	Keith A Stanley
John R Childers	Gerald C Lallier	Jane P Powers	Ellsworth C Stewart
Michael S Christman	William A MacDonald	Joseph Rauchle	Carl P Tedder
Raymond H Clary	Dominick O Maggioro	Irving A Rich	William A Teichert
Eugene J Doran	John P McCarthy	Richard A Roberts	John E Tillotson
Charlie Dunn	Rodney J McDonald	David M Robinson	Allen C Weickers
John C Felix	James W Meekin	Gary D Robinson	Robert S Whalen
George H Ferreira	Vincent P Melchionno	Steven E Ross	Dennis P White
Edward C Gagnon	David M Millard	David H Sawyer	Robert P Winters

CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS

Chapter members interested in attending the “virtual” monthly Board of Director’s meeting may do so by sending an email request with your full name and address to info@newenglandpva.org requesting a “BOD Meeting Invite”. You will receive the meeting connection information via email the day of the meeting. The regular monthly Board meetings are typically held the first Wednesday of the month and start at 10:45 AM. As with the in-person meetings, you’ll have the opportunity to listen-in to the meeting’s discussions, but reserved from speaking.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Chapter Board meetings, please email them to info@newenglandpva.org.

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.

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.



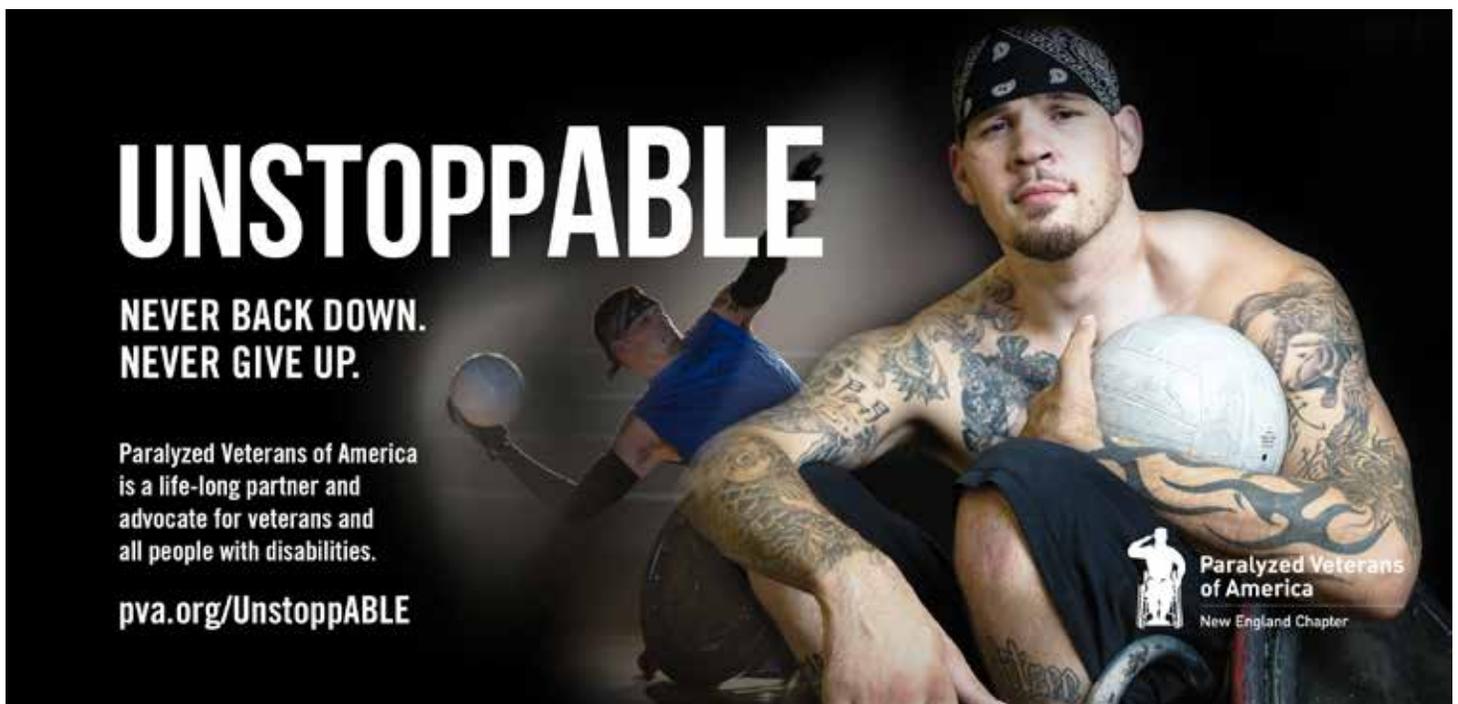
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Office Hours
Mon-Fri, 8:30am - 4:30pm

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NEVER BACK DOWN.
NEVER GIVE UP.

Paralyzed Veterans of America
is a life-long partner and
advocate for veterans and
all people with disabilities.

pva.org/UnstoppABLE

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of America
New England Chapter

For 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

Serving Paralyzed Veterans and the Disabled Community Since 1947.