



CORDWORD

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

New England Chapter

2021 Virtual AdLeg Week

See page 6



UNITED ★ STATES CONGRESS

INSIDE THIS EDITION



NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER OFFICES

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FREE TAX ASSISTANCE



Free tax assistance for those who need it most

As we inch closer to the April 15 tax deadline, AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide is among the programs aimed at helping the military community and others file their state and federal tax returns. Tax-Aide is free and available (appointment only) to all Veterans, military personnel and their families regardless of age or whether they are AARP members.

"In this new environment of COVID, Tax-Aide has instituted a range of tax preparation assistance models that can help Veterans, those currently in the military and othercontinued on page 11.

DIGITAL NOTIFICATIONS



Veterans, their families and caregivers can now receive digital notifications through VANotify, a new paperless platform.

While Veterans already receive appointment notifications through VEText, VA sends most notifications via postal mail. With VANotify, Veterans can now receive even more VA notifications by email and text.

Veterans do not have to sign up for VANotify. VA automatically is using it on the back-end to streamlinecontinued on page 9.

COVID VACCINATIONS FOR VETERANS OF ALL AGES



VA Boston Healthcare System



Veterans of all ages enrolled in the VA Healthcare System can now call 857-203-3919 to schedule an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine at VA Boston's Brockton, Jamaica Plain or West Roxbury campuses.

Veterans can call 877-222-8387 to enroll in VA Healthcare. VA Boston offers both the Moderna and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines and Veterans will be offered a vaccine based on clinical need and vaccine inventory.

For those receiving the Moderna vaccine a second dose will be scheduled 28 days later. For those receiving the Janssen vaccine a second shot is not needed.

White River Junction VA Medical Center, VT

Are you a VHA enrolled Veteran and would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccine? We are ready for your call to schedule! **Open to all ages** of VHA enrolled Veterans- 802-296-5151!

Not sure of your eligibility please call 802-295-9363 ext 5118 which is our eligibility office- They are experiencing a larger than usual wait time with the increased call volume, but know your call is important and will be returned!

Manchester VA Medical Center, NH

VA Manchester is opening up vaccine appointments to **ALL** enrolled Veterans, **regardless of age**. Designated Caregivers enrolled in VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers Support may also receive the COVID vaccine with the Veteran for whom they care. (Veteran is required to be present with the enrolled caregiver.)

Enrolled Veterans should call the COVID Vaccination Call Center at 800-

892-8384 x 3199 to schedule their appointment at the vaccination clinic. The appointment line is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. weekdays. After receiving the vaccine, Veterans will be monitored for 15 minutes. Enrolled Veterans who have their mobile number on file should receive a text message from VA Manchester and can reply to schedule their COVID vaccination appointment.

Connecticut VA Healthcare System, CT

Connecticut veterans of **all ages** are now eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccination through the VA Connecticut Healthcare System as of March 1, 2021. Veterans who want to receive the vaccine must be enrolled for care with the VA.

The VA is administering the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Location will determine which vaccine is provided and it will be done first come, first

served.

CT Veterans who are not contacted by the VA who want to schedule an appointment should call **Call 203-932-5711 ext. 5627, 7784 or 7754** to make an appointment.

Providence VA Medical Center, RI

We are pleased to announce that we are vaccinating enrolled Veterans of **all ages**!

We are open Monday thru Friday from 8am-2pm for walk-in vaccinations. Every Veteran who comes will receive a vaccine or an appointment for the vaccine in the near future. Please check in with the screening staff at the main entrance for directions to the vaccination clinic. If you are a Veteran

who receives care in our Community Based Outpatient Clinics you are welcome to come to the main medical center for your vaccine.

For questions regarding vaccine appointments please call **(401) 273-7100 extension 16226**.

New England PVA Contact Information

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West Roxbury, MA 02132
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PROGRAM DIRECTORS

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White River Junction
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ON THE COVER: Virtual Zoom meeting with Congressman Courtney's (D-CT) Staff

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

As we all start preparing to enjoy the coming warm weather of spring and summer, take a moment to reflect on the pandemic year gone past. In the year gone past, the pandemic has effected every part of our lives, economy and government, the most poignant of which is the unimaginable loss of over [500,000 lives to COVID-19 across our country](#). As a Chapter, we have lost members to this virus. I would ask as you read this, to take a moment of pause to remember our fellow members and all the lives lost this past year. I have not met someone yet, who doesn't have a connection to someone who's perished from this virus.

I would encourage every Chapter member to get vaccinated. [Page 2](#) lists several VA facilities in MA, NH, CT, RI and VT where you can receive a vaccination regardless of age. Surprisingly, the VA is well ahead of their community care counterparts. They were able to work down the age related [CDC guidelines](#) in record time. Early on, in VISN1, they recognized the need to re-prioritize SCI Veterans as high-risk and moved them from 1c to 1b status. Although there were some communication issues in the execution of getting these Veterans notified, [VA Boston Healthcare Director Vincent Ng](#) was very open to listening to our concerns and acting on them. As it stands now in VISN1, every member, every Veteran, is eligible

to receive a COVID-19 vaccination regardless of their age. Again, I would encourage you to contact the closest VA facility to schedule a vaccination appointment. I'd also recommend frequently checking the [CDC website](#) for current and updated COVID-19 recommendations and guidelines to follow.

During the first week of March I had the privilege of representing our Chapter members before several New England Congressional offices. That being said, they were uniquely different from years past, as these meetings were all conducted virtually. See [page 6](#) for a snapshot of one of the "Zoom" meetings with Congressional staff. There's some real traction on some of our [Legislative Priorities](#) this Congressional session, the AUTO act and ART being two of them. And please give [Kristen](#), our "new" [Government Relations Director](#), a round of applause for her large role in the Chapter receiving the **2021 PVA Richard Fuller Outstanding Achievement in Government Relations Award!** You can [read the details](#) of our [Government Relations program's](#) efforts this past year to earn this prestigious PVA award on [page 7](#). If you are interested in joining the efforts of our GR program, Kristen would be glad to hear from you. You can reach her via email at kristen@newenglandpva.org or 800-660-1181 #3.

The Chapter also received two other PVA awards this month, the **2021 PVA Bob Webb Excellence in a Newsletter Award** and the **2021 PVA John M. Price Most Improved Chapter Award**. It took a lot of dedication, hard work and leadership to get the Chapter from where it was a few short years ago to where it successfully today. If you're interested in reading the Chapter award submissions detailing the work leading up to receiving these awards, please feel free to email me at michael@newenglandpva.org. Pending any pandemic restrictions, these awards will be presented at PVA's 75th Annual Convention this coming May.

Part of our success has been our ability to adapt and pivot when needed to continue meeting the needs of the Chapter and its membership. To this point, I started a monthly series of benefits and program webinars. The first was on Veterans Adaptive Vehicle Benefits, which overwhelming receive by all who attended. There were a wide array of attendees from all across the country, and even Puerto Rico. Our next webinar this coming Tuesday, March the 23rd will be on [PVA's Veteran Career Program](#) lead by Program Director Lauren Lobrano. You can preregister [HERE](#) to attend. The following April webinar will be on [VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids with VISN1 Service Line Manager Josh Dixon](#). If there's a subject you'd like covered, please email me at michael@newenglandpva.org. I'd be more than glad to hear your ideas and see what can be arranged to the benefit of all our members.

Finally, I received a very positive response to my February *Out Front* commentary [The Problematic Thinking of "Ain't Broke, Don't Fix it."](#) It really is this mindset that has helped to move our Chapter forward from its recent past and is still needed to propel it into the future. I'm always open to new ideas to help meet the needs of our Chapter and its members, so please feel free to contact me directly if you have ideas you'd like to share. I can always be reached directly via email at michael@newenglandpva.org or at 857-229-8825.

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

From the Director's Desk

Mark Murphy, Chapter Executive Director

It is hard to believe that this month marks the one-year anniversary that we had to temporarily close our Chapter office because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Never at that time did I anticipate that one year later myself, our employees, and Board members would still be working remotely. While the reality of the pandemic has dramatically affected the daily lives of us all over the past many months, there are many signs of hope as we look forward to the next few months. As vaccines become more available and as we progress forward into Phase 4 of the Massachusetts re-open plan, we are all hoping that things will return to some semblance of normalcy. While last month we had several concerns regarding the prioritization of vaccines for SCI patients, it is a relief to know that in Massachusetts vaccines are now being offered to all veterans who are enrolled in the VA healthcare system. I would ask our members to contact their VA healthcare provider to see about getting a vaccine, if you have not done so already.



On February 23rd we held an adaptive vehicle benefits webinar hosted by Chapter President Michael Negrete and several of our PVA Service Officers here in New England. I was delighted that there was solid participation in this webinar from dozens of people across New England and the country. We received very positive feedback from several attendees on how informative and well presented the webinar was. Because this webinar was so successful, we will be hosting future webinars on topics of interest for our members, so please stay tuned for that.

During the week of March 1-5, I participated in the PVA Annual Advocacy/Legislation Seminar. While things were quite different this year in holding meetings virtually as opposed to in person down in Washington D.C., the week still went very well. We had about 10 meetings with congressional offices from across New England, and some of the issues that were discussed included protecting access to VA's specialized services, improving access to fertility services through the VA, the AUTO Act, increased grants for housing adaptations, and improving access to air travel. We are grateful to our Government Relations Director Kristen McCone Gordon for helping to assist our Chapter delegation to be so well prepared in advocating on behalf of the best interests of our members during this very important week.

Our Chapter fundraising program is starting to heat up. I recently applied for a community foundation grant for \$5,000, and I am currently applying for a VA grant for adaptive sports to support disabled veterans. I am also continuing to research other grants that we can apply for during this Spring cycle. Speaking of fundraising, last month in my CordWord column I mentioned our current planning for a New England PVA golf tournament this Summer, and I am happy to report that we are confirmed to hold a Chapter golf tournament at Falmouth Country Club in Falmouth, Massachusetts on Friday, June 11th. In the next several weeks we will be posting information on our website regarding the tournament, including registration and sponsorship opportunity information. We are very excited to be bringing back an annual golf tournament in support of the Chapter, and we hope that you will consider being a part of this fun day of golf, friendship, and community. Please contact me directly for more information as well.

Circling back to the beginning of my column, as we mark the one-year anniversary of the "shutdown" due to the pandemic, may we remember in our minds and hearts the over 500,000 Americans who have perished from it. May they all Rest in Peace, and may their families and friends experience some measure of peace and consolation.

A handwritten signature of Mark Murphy in black ink.

Mark Murphy

Chapter Executive Director

and Massachusetts Army National Guard Veteran

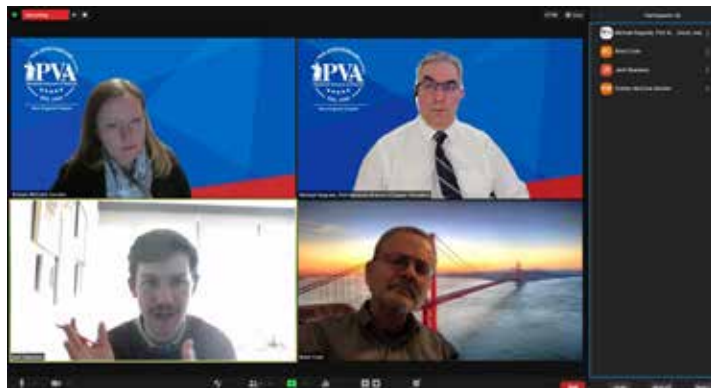


FROM the HILL

Kristen McCone Gordon, Chapter Government Relations Director

Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of joining Chapter President Michael Negrete, Executive Director Mark Murphy, NEPVA members Debra Freed and Brent Cote, along with Chapters nationwide to participate in PVA's annual Pushing Access Forward seminar. Though the seminar and

corresponding congressional meetings were held virtually this year due to the pandemic, it was a successful week spent learning of the issues affecting members across the country and of PVA's compelling legislative solutions to address them.



Our NEPVA delegation had an opportunity to meet with staff of many of our New England Congressional offices. Over the course of three days, we briefed the staff of Congressman Auchincloss (D,MA), Senator King (I,ME), Congressman Golden (D,ME), Congresswoman DeLauro (D,CT), Congressman Langevin (D,RI), Senator Leahy (D,VT), Congresswoman Pingree (D,ME), Congressman Courtney (D,CT), and Congressman Lynch (D,MA). These meetings were in addition to the thirteen briefings we held virtually in the district throughout 2020.

In large part due to the willingness and skills of Chapter President Michael Negrete and our participating members in sharing their lived experiences with the issues we raised, we received very positive and promising feedback during our discussions. I look forward to keeping you informed of the New England Delegation's support for these issues. I also look forward to continuing our conversations in the district and working to advance these critical legislative priorities.

OUR 2021 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

PVA released the priority issues that our organization will advocate for during the first session of the 117th Congress. These issues reflect areas of concern for our members, as both veterans with spinal cord injury or disease and people living with disabilities. However, as an organization and a Chapter, we remain a steadfast advocate for all veterans and all people with disabilities.

While the complete list of our 2021 priorities can be found on our website, I'd like to share a few of the issues that we discussed in great detail with the New England Congressional Delegation.

Preserve Access to VA's Specialized Services

We informed congressional staff that Preserving Access to VA's Specialized Services, particularly the Spinal Cord Injury/Disease (SCI/D) system of care, remains our guiding priority.

We discussed our belief that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is the best health care provider for veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D), and highlighted that VA's specialized systems of care follows higher clinical standards than those required in the private sector. We also raised that the lack of adequate long-term care (LTC) options presents significant issues for our members in New England.

We believe Congress must preserve access to VA's specialized services and provide needed funding for them. Additionally, Congress must ensure proper staffing of these systems of care by ensuring the Department has the authority to provide additional pay, compensation, and retention incentives to make VA service more competitive with the private sector.

Improve Access to Transportation for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans

We continued our advocacy on behalf of the AUTO for Veterans Act, which would allow eligible veterans to receive an Automobile Allowance Grant every ten years for the purchase of an adapted vehicle.

During our meetings, Chapter President Michael Negrete relayed that access to an adapted vehicle is essential to the mobility and health of catastrophically disabled veterans who need a reliable means of transportation in order to work, attend medical appointments, and maintain independence. We also discussed how the substantial costs of modified vehicles, coupled with inflation, present a very significant financial hardship for our members who need to replace their primary mode of transportation once it reaches its lifespan. Finally, we raised the needs of our members with non-service-connected injuries, and advocated that they should receive the same type of adaptive automobile equipment as veterans with service-connected injuries.

Strengthen the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)

We also discussed our Chapter's support for the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act. This legislation would: 1) strengthen ACAA administrative enforcement and establish a private right to action; as well as, 2) ensure new airplanes are designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities by requiring airlines to meet defined accessibility standards. These standards will address safe and effective boarding and deplaning, visually accessible announcements, seating accommodations, restrooms, and better stowage options for assistive devices. They would also require the removal of access barriers on existing airplanes to the extent that it is readily achievable and may be done without much difficulty or expense. [...continued on page 9](#)

New England Chapter Receives 2021 PVA Richard Fuller Outstanding Achievement in Government Relations Award

Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President



*Michael Negrete
Chapter President*

Over the past year, the New England Chapter has made extraordinary progress in the areas of government relations and advocacy, and I'm proud to share with you some of the Chapter's hard work and achievements that lead up to receiving this prestigious award PVA.

In February 2020, the Chapter hired [Kristen McCone Gordon](#), an exceptionally qualified and talented professional, to fill the role of a separate and dedicated Government Relations Director. Kristen has significant experience providing policy analysis and advice at high levels within both state and federal agencies, as detailed in the our [Chapter Press Release](#) announcing her hiring. Given her proven experience, one of her first responsibilities was to re-establish the Chapter's languishing Government Relations and Advocacy programs.

The week after being hired, Kristen was immediately thrust into educating herself on PVA's legislative priorities in preparation for attending the 2020 Advocacy and Legislative Seminar in Washington, D.C. with the rest of our Chapter Ad/Leg delegation. She was able to quickly understand both the relevance and importance of these priorities and their impact on PVA's membership. This allowed her, as the rest of our attendees do, to independently and successfully meet with our Legislators to convey the gravity of these priorities in articulate and meaningful ways to them. Our delegation was able to successfully meet in-person with 26 of the 33 legislators represented in New England. The delegation's hard work became self-evident once returning to New England as the Chapter received numerous follow-up responses from Congressional field offices. Little did we know, how valuable these relationships would be in the coming months of a global pandemic.

After returning from Ad/Leg, we created the "From the Hill" editorial column published monthly in the Chapter newsletter the [CordWord](#) and on our [website](#). This new editorial allows our Government Relations and Advocacy programs to present timely focused content on issues requiring immediate attention whether through channels like [VoterVoice](#), phone calls or letter writing campaigns. As a result, the Chapter has been able to cultivate greater member involvement in our GR program as reflected by a three-fold increase in [VoterVoice](#) participation throughout the year. There has also been a marked increase in member letter writing and testimonials.

Also, after returning from Ad/Leg, COVID-19 hit the country requiring the Chapter to immediately pivot our focus to critical healthcare policies throughout New England, that were ruthlessly discriminating against the rights of our members and the disabled. Kristen quickly aligned the

Chapter with like-minded organizations and joined coalitions to combat these policies. Kristen recognized that in order to make an impact, our members voices needed to be heard. At her request, several Chapter members provided personal statements to state officials on how they would be affected by these draconian policies. You can read a sample of these [letters and testimonials](#). Through collective hard work and dedication, the coalitions ultimately motivated several New England states to change their policies.

Amid the challenges of COVID-19, Kristen continued the re-vitalization of our Chapter's GR program by "virtually" meeting with over a dozen district offices. These meetings worked both to reinforce relationships and further advocate for the priorities presented during Ad/Leg. Through the collaborative advocacy efforts of Neal Williams, one of our Maine members, Senator Collins (R-ME) introduced S.4155 the AUTO Act for Veterans. We believe our Chapter's persistent and thorough advocacy was a determining factor in Senator Hassan (D-NH) cosponsoring the AUTO act. Additional advocacy efforts resulted in Congresswoman Pressley (D-MA) and Congresswoman Hayes (D-CT) signing onto the Access to IVF shortly after our second discussions with their staff.

I believe there are strong indicators that Kristen's outreach work to so many over the past year has made a significant difference in the effectiveness of the Chapter's Government Relations and Advocacy programs. Several members of Congress have signed on to additional PVA legislative priorities following discussions with Kristen, and others have told us they are seriously reviewing them.

I was refreshingly surprised recently when Senator Hassan's office contacted the Chapter to schedule a teleconference. She wanted to learn what our New Hampshire member's needs were and how she could assist in addressing them in her legislative plans for the coming year. This was a first for the Chapter and is attributed to the strong relationship formed with her since taking office and Kristen's ability to skillfully communicate our priorities with her staff.

This is only a brief summary with so much more that could be said. To learn more about our Government Relations and Advocacy program, please feel free to contact Kristen directly via [email](#) or at 800-660-1181 ext. 3.



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“From the Hill”

Kristen McCone Gordon, Chapter Government Relations Director - Continued from page 6

We shared experiences of PVA members being injured while boarding planes, of wheelchairs being damaged while stored, and of airline staff not being properly trained to understand the difficulties that a wheelchair-bound person experiences while flying. The personal stories seemed to really resonate with congressional staff, and we hope that our conversations will translate into more members of our New England Congressional Delegation cosponsoring this important piece of legislation.

Improve Access to Fertility Services Through VA

We continued to ask the New England Congressional Delegation to repeal VA's ban on in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and make these services a regular part of the medical benefits package available to veterans. This year, we are asking Congress to specifically pass legislation to authorize VA to provide assisted reproductive technology, including IVF, surrogacy, and gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care who are living with infertility, including the authorization of service provision to non-veteran partners.

We echoed the belief that our country has a moral obligation to restore what has been lost to our service men and women. We reminded congressional staff that our members served this nation well, many

sustaining life-changing injuries while doing so, and they deserve the chance to start a family. If you have experienced infertility as a result of your injury, and would be willing to discuss this issue with me either privately or in a meeting with your Representative, please contact me at kristen@newenglandpva.org.

CONTINUING OUR ADVOCACY IN THE DISTRICT

While our annual week on Capitol Hill is an important kick-off to the year, our advocacy does not end there. I look forward to many more discussions with our congressional delegation throughout the year. As our country continues to move closer towards the end of the pandemic, it's our hope and intention to be able to provide any interested member with an opportunity to meet with your Representative in the district, whether in a meeting discussing issues of concern or at one of our many adaptive sporting events.

As always, I hope to hear from you and continue to learn how these issues are affecting your lives. I would also love to welcome more members into our growing advocacy team. If you would like to get more involved, or would like to discuss any of our priorities in greater detail, please don't hesitate to contact me at kristen@newenglandpva.org.

Service Animals: An Overview of the ADA and Other Disability Rights Laws

Presented by the New England ADA Center



On **Wednesday March 31, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** the New England ADA Center will present a free 1.5 hour webinar on the rights of people with disabilities to have service animals in various environments. Service animals will be examined through the lens of several intersecting laws including: the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, and the Air Carrier Access Act. The session will cover the definition of service animal, what inquiries may be made, when documentation of disability-related need is permitted, emotional support animals, miniature horses and animals-in-training. There will be time for questions.

Registration for this event is free and required. [CLICK HERE](#) to register.

The Zoom link for this event is included in the Eventbrite registration confirmation.

For questions and to request accommodations such as closed captioning, contact Jason Angel at adainfo@NewEnglandADA.org or 617-695-0085. Please request accommodations by March 25.



Presenter: Jason Angel

ADA Information Specialist, Trainer, and Researcher for the New England ADA Center

You Can Help Design VA's Future

via VAntage Point by Dr. Richard Stone Acting Under Secretary of Health for the Veterans Health Administration



After almost a year of disconnection, desperation, loss, isolation, and numbness because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now more hope and positivity around us. We have new weapons in the war against the pandemic – three safe and proven vaccines that can significantly protect us from hospitalization and death caused by the coronavirus.

This good news means that now is the time for VA to evaluate the lessons it has learned in the past year: the processes we've developed to provide efficient, optimal care to Veterans, and how we've recalibrated to improve the nation's largest integrated health care system. But, how else can we best serve our Veterans for the many years to come?

The first step is listening to you – tuning into your thoughts, opinions, ideas, needs, feelings and suggestions for building a VA that best serves our mission. You are what's most important to VA's future, and your opinion is the most valued.

We want to hear from you

VA will be holding public virtual listening sessions across the country from March 2021 through June 2021. We want to hear the voices and insights of Veterans and the communities that VA serves. We are hosting these sessions to learn from you how we should design a health care system of the future, and how to grow its services for Veterans in a way that also reinforces VA's role as a leader in U.S. health care.

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

These listening sessions represent an exciting opportunity for Veterans to help VA reimagine how we deliver care in an equitable, high quality, Veteran-centered manner and to develop a plan for investing in VA's aging infrastructure. It won't be just talk – we are committed to modernizing VA significantly and we want to make sure we are in close step with the Veterans we serve.

Now is the time to help determine the future of VA. We can't do it without you.

Where and how

Additional information, including session dates, times, and registration information, is available at <https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPOLICYPLANNING/listening.asp>.



Paralyzed Veterans of America

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AARP, others Offer Free Tax Prep Help to Veterans, Military and Families

By Aaron Kassraie, associate writer and editor for AARP via Vantage Point blogs.va.gov

AARP Foundation[®]

TAX-AIDE

Free tax assistance for those who need it most

As we inch closer to the April 15 tax deadline, AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide is among the programs aimed at helping the military community and others file their state and federal tax returns. Tax-Aide is free and available (appointment only) to all Veterans, military personnel and their families regardless of age or whether they are AARP members.

"In this new environment of COVID, Tax-Aide has instituted a range of tax preparation assistance models that can help Veterans, those currently in the military and others," said Lynnette Lee-Villanueva, vice president and national director of AARP Foundation Tax-Aide. *"From safely delivered in-person service, virtual assistance and hybrid options – we are here to help."*

The nationwide tax help program is geared toward people 50 and older or those who have low to moderate incomes, but Tax-Aide is open to anyone free of charge. AARP membership isn't required to take advantage of Tax-Aide's knowledgeable volunteers, nor will there be any sales pitch for other services.

If you'd like to look for an appointment to receive tax filing assistance from AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide, [click here to get started](#).

Due to the pandemic, Tax-Aide availability is limited this year. Other programs offering free tax help include Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), IRS Free File and MilTax.

In addition, here is some helpful information specifically for military Veterans from CPA and tax expert Lisa Greene-Lewis of TurboTax. [See the rest of her tax advice for military Veterans on aarp.org here.](#)

VA payments exempt from federal taxes:

- VA education benefit payments.
- VA disability payments.
- Interest from VA life insurance policies.
- Benefits under a dependent-care assistance program.
- Money paid to a survivor of a member of the armed forces who died after Sept. 10, 2001.
- Payments made under the compensated work therapy program.
- Any bonus pay from a state, county, city or town because of service in a combat zone.

Fast facts on state taxes:

- States typically offer tax benefits only to Veterans who were honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active duty.
- State benefits usually include some form of exemptions on property taxes, according to value.
- Benefits are often transferred over to a spouse or surviving spouse of honorably discharged Veterans.
- Many states include additional benefits for Veterans who are disabled.
- Every state's revenue website outlines state benefits for Veterans and how to apply for them.

[Bookmark the Veterans, Military and Their Families page on aarp.org](#) to stay up to date with the latest news and information affecting older Veterans at aarp.org/veterans. AARP resources for Veterans are free and available to nonmembers.

Confidential help for Veterans and their families



• • • Confidential chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net or text to **838255** • • •

PVA WASHINGTON UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

PVA Washington Update Volume 27, Number 4

PVA National President David Zurfluh Testimony on March 4

On March 4 at 10:00 AM ET, PVA National President David Zurfluh testified, along with leaders of other veterans service organizations, before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on our

2021 legislative priorities. The hearing is virtual and will be available for viewing [here](#). Please invite all PVA members, their families, and caregivers to watch this important testimony.

COVID-19 Relief Bill Would Provide \$17B to VA

On February 11, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee passed its portion of the latest COVID response package, the "American Rescue Plan," along a party line vote. The package would provide approximately \$17 billion for VA. Of that amount, \$13.5 billion would help VA provide health care services and related support to eligible veterans, including COVID-19 vaccine distribution, expanded mental health care, enhanced telehealth capabilities, community care, extended support for veterans who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, and personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies for clinical employees.

Much of the remaining amount would help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the benefits claims and appeals backlog (\$272 million); accelerate the Department's supply chain modernization efforts and improve its preparedness and response to public health emergencies

(\$100 million); support COVID-19 response, staff and veteran safety, and preparedness at State Veterans Homes (\$750 million); and provide up to 12 months of retraining assistance for veterans who are unemployed due to COVID-19 and do not have other veteran education benefits (\$386 million). Other language in the bill directs VA to waive any co-pays for all VA medical appointments from April 6, 2020, through September 30, 2021, which, if passed in the final bill, would require the Department to reimburse veterans who have already paid. The entire bill will be subject to considerable debate and negotiation in the coming days, so changes are likely. It is advancing largely along party lines but is expected to receive floor time and votes in both chambers during the month of March.

House Appropriators Examine VA's COVID Response

On February 19, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a [virtual hearing](#) to assess how well VA is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics covered during the hearing included the COVID vaccine rollout and distribution, therapies for COVID-19 patients, the utilization of telehealth, and health care accessibility in rural and hard-to-reach communities. Dr. Richard Stone, Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, told the panel that the limited vaccine supply has inhibited the Department's ability to distribute the vaccine to veterans and VA staff. So far, VA has administered more than 1.3 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine; nearly one million of them went to veterans. He said VA is enrolling eligible veterans so they can receive the vaccine but made it clear that the Department does not have the supplies or authority to vaccinate the broader population of veterans who are not eligible for VA health care at this time.

Dr. Stone also spoke about COVID-related funding received last year and the Department's need for additional funding for its COVID-19 response. The Department already used \$6.5 billion of the more than \$19 billion Congress gave the Department last year through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The remaining amount will be committed this year and the additional funding Congress is now considering would go toward health care costs, personal protective equipment (PPE), and several large-scale modernization efforts. Dr. Stone also said VA has begun talking about the long-term ramifications of the pandemic. Stone said, "We know that there's a huge impact on deferred and delayed care that will begin to come in. We know that there's a huge effect on unemployment, where people lose their health insurance and come to us as a safety net."

Reeve Foundation Survey on COVID-19 Vaccine Experiences

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation is inviting persons with SCI/D to take part in a [survey](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine. They would like to hear about peoples' plans regarding the vaccine, if it's available to them now, their sense of the government's response to distribution of

the vaccine and more. The data collected from this survey will be used to advocate for the community around the COVID-19 vaccine. The survey is anonymous and no personal identifying information will be collected.

Disenrolled from TRICARE Select? Here's How to Reinstate Your Coverage

As of January 1, 2021, military retirees who enlisted prior to 2018 and use TRICARE Select programs are required to pay enrollment fees each month. If you didn't set up your enrollment fees for TRICARE Select or TRICARE Overseas Program Select coverage last year, you were disenrolled as of

December 31, 2020. If you want to have TRICARE Select coverage this year, you must request reinstatement with your TRICARE contractor. You have until June 30, 2021, to make your request. Click [here](#) to learn more.

VA OIG Report, “Insufficient Oversight for Issuing Prosthetic Supplies and Devices”

According to a recent VA Office of Inspector General Report, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has oversight weaknesses that led to PSAS staff improperly cloning consults. Consequently, VHA improperly issued an estimated \$15.8 million in prosthetic supplies during (calendar year) 2017. In contrast, the audit team determined that VHA maintained

adequate oversight to prevent duplicate supply issuance. Additionally, the OIG found that while six percent of transactions for supplies to deceased veterans were improper, the team did not identify evidence of fraud. The report is available [here](#).

Space A Travel for Eligible Dependents of Disabled Veterans

A change in law two years ago allowed permanently and totally disabled veterans to take advantage of military Space A travel within the continental US (CONUS), or directly between the CONUS and Alaska, Hawaii, or U.S. territories. Late last year, the Department of Defense (DOD) updated its Space A [guidance](#) to allow eligible dependent family members of these veterans to travel with them. For now, Space A travel is strictly limited

to official travel due to the pandemic. Once DOD resumes normal flight operations, you may want to check it out and see if it is a viable option for you and your eligible dependents. For up-to-date information about military Space A travel, visit the Air Mobility Command’s [Space-A travel website](#).

DOL VETS Deputy Assistant Secretary Assumes Post

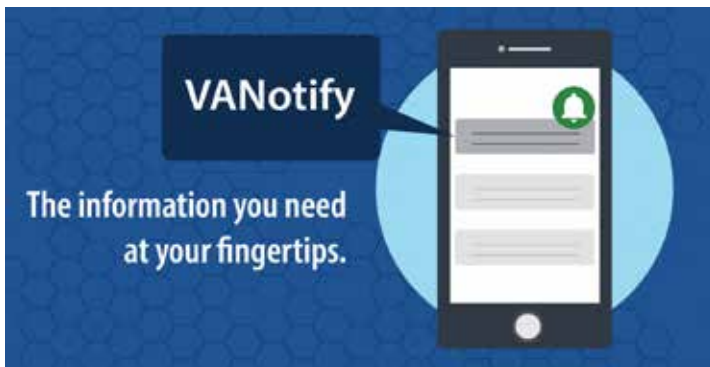
Mr. James D. Rodriguez has taken his place as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy while serving as Acting Assistant Secretary within the Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. He will serve in the acting capacity until a permanent Assistant Secretary is nominated and confirmed by the Senate. Prior to his recent appointment, Mr. Rodriguez served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Warrior Care Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense from 2014 through

2017. Mr. Rodriguez spent several years in the corporate arena but prior to that served twenty-one years in the United States Marine Corps. During his final duty assignment at Balboa Naval Hospital, he was the Senior Enlisted Leader/Advisor to the Officer in Charge of the Wounded Warrior Battalion, where he was responsible for the rehabilitation, transition, professional development, and education of service members with service-connected disabilities.



Veterans Get Updates through New Digital Notification Feature

Story courtesy of VA Office of Information and Technology via [Vantage Point blogs.va.gov](https://vantagepoint.blogs.va.gov)



Veterans, their families and caregivers can now receive digital notifications through VANotify, a new paperless platform.

While Veterans already receive appointment notifications through VEText, VA sends most notifications via postal mail. With VANotify, Veterans can now receive even more VA notifications by email and text.

Veterans do not have to sign up for VANotify. VA automatically is using it on the back-end to streamline communications to Veterans who receive services from VA, as long as the Veteran's contact information with [VA is up to date](#).

Mail delivery is a slow and expensive process. It can lead to Veterans amassing piles of letters related to their health care, benefits, and other services. Challenges can also arise when Veterans change addresses or do not have easy access to a mailbox. With the launch of VANotify, which was developed using open source software, VA further expands the Department's capability to effortlessly send Veterans emails and texts to support the following functions:

- Confirming Veterans' receipt of benefits applications
- Notifying Veterans of changes to their VA accounts
- Helping Veterans track their VA Pharmacy deliveries

Other Uses

Most recently, VA used the feature to notify Veterans about [COVID-19 vaccinations](#). Over 200,000 Veterans received communications around vaccination planning through VANotify.

There are plans to expand the use of VANotify to include:

- Sending monthly SMS notifications about benefit payments
- Sending information about debt acquisition
- Expanding VANotify features to enable push notifications (automated messages sent by VA applications to a user)

VA's investments in digital applications such as the [COVID-19 Chatbot](#), "[I am Here](#)" texting solution, the [Digital Screener](#) tool, and now VANotify, ensure Veterans have more options and flexibility in accessing the benefits and services they have earned.

Charles Worthington, VA's chief technology officer, highlighted the technologists, analysts, and partners across VA and private industry who collaborated to deliver this innovative IT solution.

"At VA, our number one priority is delivering excellent customer service to our Veterans," Worthington said. "It has been incredible to see so many VA staff from across the agency come together and quickly deliver creative solutions to new problems. VANotify is a great example of VA's commitment to using new technologies to improve our services."

Discovering the Importance of Mindfulness

Presented by PVA Sports and Recreation



PVA Sports and Recreation is hosting the webinar: **Discovering the Importance of Mindfulness** on **Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 1 pm** with retired Major League Baseball Player, Darnell McDonald and Performance Coach, Audrey Lee.

I encourage you to join the webinar as it will explore the benefits of meditation and yoga and how it is a useful instrument in living a healthy and active lifestyle.

Please also share this invitation widely with your membership. The first 30 PVA members to register will receive a mini baseball bat signed by Darnell McDonald. Must attend to qualify.

To register [CLICK HERE](#).

If you have any questions about the event, please contact PVA Director of Sports and Recreation Fabio Villarroel at FabioV@pva.org.

She Wears the Boots Podcast: Women's Health Experts

via Vantage Point by Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Officer for VA's Women's Health



Hear directly from VA clinicians, experts, leaders

Women are the fastest growing group of Veterans. In fact, women make up 30% of all new Veterans Health Administration (VHA) patients. Women Veterans have many of the same health care needs as non-Veteran women. Many also have health concerns unique to their military service and experiences.

Women Veterans need and want health care information they can trust. And VA wants women Veterans to understand and feel comfortable using all the health services they have earned and deserve.

Hear directly from VA clinicians, experts and leaders

She Wears the Boots is an official VA-sponsored podcast that addresses healthcare topics relevant to current and former women service members. Episodes feature VA clinicians, leaders and other experts who share details about the variety of women-specific health care services that VA offers.

The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on part of New England PVA or the VA.

The podcast is meant to enhance the lives of service women and women Veterans by celebrating their service and sharing information on specific topics that can improve their well-being. They focus on educating women about gender-specific services or healthcare concerns that may be of high interest to women who served.

"Sometimes in the private sector, women may have their care fragmented.

But in VA, women have access to their general health care and women-specific care with one provider, at one site," said Dr. Sally Haskell, deputy chief consultant for Clinical Operations and the director of Comprehensive Health for Women's Health at VA Central Office. "VA provides the care women Veterans need and offers comprehensive women's health care, maternity care, infertility services and care for women Veterans with LGBT+ and related identities."

Learn about women's health services

Listening to the She Wears the Boots podcast is a great way for transitioning service women and women Veterans to get the information that is the most relevant to their unique healthcare needs and resources that best serve their needs. Women can listen from their computers while they are taking a break from teleworking, or from their phones when they are on the go, exercising or even driving.

New podcasts come out regularly, and current topics include:

- [Women's Health in the VA Overview](#)
- [Women Veteran Call Center](#)
- [Comprehensive Women's Health Care in the VA](#)
- [Maternity Care in the VA](#)
- [Infertility Services in the VA](#)
- [LGBTQ Care in the VA](#)
- [White Ribbon VA](#)
- [Women's Health Transition Training](#)
- [Addressing Misperceptions of the VA, Women's Health Transition Training](#)
- [A Participant's Experience, Women's Health Transition Training](#)
- [Flu Shot Facts and Myths](#)
- [Mammograms through the VA](#)
- [Heart Health Facts and Myths](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination in Women](#)

The podcast is available on [Spreaker](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

YOUR INVITED: CHAPTER ONLINE 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 meetings@newenglandpva.org requesting a "BOD Meeting Invite". You will receive the meeting connection information via email the day before the meeting or sooner. 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 unless called upon.

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



Veterans Career Program

Career Support for ALL Veterans

With Paralyzed Veterans of America's Veterans Career Program,

You Will:

- Receive carefully tailored **one-on-one support** from a career expert 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.
- Build confidence in your career pursuits.
- And much more!



We Will:

- Provide one-on-one guidance to help you find **meaningful employment, education and volunteer opportunities**.
- Assess your current abilities, training, and experience and help you identify career goals.
- Guide you through development and enhancement of your resume and cover letter.
- 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/VeteransCareerProgram • VeteransCareerProgram@PVA.org • [f ParalyzedVeterans](https://www.facebook.com/ParalyzedVeterans) • [i PVA1946](https://www.instagram.com/PVA1946)

PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

February 2021

SUCCESS STORY: BRIAN McLERAN

For PVA Member and Navy Veteran Brian McLeran returning to work was a daunting prospect. Brian had been out of the workplace for 10 years when he took that first step of exploring a career by reaching out to PVA's Veterans Career Program. Then, PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Joel Hoots, MS, and Brian spent several months discussing whether education or paid employment was the right next step. Ultimately, Brian decided that an entry level job would be the best option for him.



Together, Brian and Joel worked through some of Brian's concerns about returning to work. After learning more about his rights in the workplace, how to discuss workplace accommodations with an employer, and the skills he would bring to the workplace, Brian began to have more confidence in himself and his abilities.

Brian initially dealt with some job rejection and turned down some jobs that he didn't feel would be a good fit. Eventually Brian decided to "go for it" and accepted a job working in a shop at his local community airport. Now that Brian is working he has found new motivation and confidence in himself.

"It's been a great experience working with the PVA Veterans Career Program. I've learned valuable job related skills, regained a lot of confidence, and now after many years have reentered the workforce. Thank you, PVA!"

Joel will continue to work with Brian, guiding him through the career development process as his confidence and interests continue to grow.

IMPACT + OPPORTUNITIES

21 Client Placements

- 16 Paid Employment
- 5 Training/Education



2 PVA Members

19 Veterans
2 Family Members

36 Total Placements
through February

PURSuing EDUCATION FOR VETERANS WITH DISABILITIES

In collaboration with Student Veterans of America (SVA), Wounded Warrior Project, and PsychArmor, PVA's Veteran Career Program developed two videos around higher education. The first video encourages veterans with significant disabilities to pursue higher education; the second video encourages veterans to make use of their college or university's disability resource office. Both videos were released at SVA's 2021 National Convention, which was attended by over 4,000 student veterans and higher education staff. Watch both videos [here](#).

Starting on Wednesday, March 17th, Veterans Career Live (formerly PAVE Connect) will begin a series of sessions focused on continuous learning and higher education.

- Readyng Veterans for Return: Education and Skill Development (3/17/2021 at 2:00 p.m. ET)
- Seeking Higher Education as a Veteran with a Disability (3/18/2021 at 4:00 p.m. ET)
- G.I. Bill Start to Finish (3/24/2021 at 4:00 p.m. ET)
- Opening the Door to Go Back to School (3/31/2021 at 4:00 p.m. ET)
- Writing a Personal Narrative (4/1/2021 at 4:00 p.m. ET)

Register for all Veterans Career Live sessions [here](#).



Powered By:



Veterans Career Program Webinar (Formerly PAVE)!

Presented by Lauren Lobrano, Director PVA Veterans Career Program



Please join PVA's Veterans Career Program for an overview of how they work with PVA members, their family members, and caregivers to guide them to meaningful employment, educational, and volunteer opportunities.

Program staff will provide an overview of the role they play as part of Social Security's SSDI/Ticket to Work program and also highlight a new special series they are offering on continuous learning and higher education as part of PVA Veterans Career Live program.

Date: March 23, 2021

Time: 01:00 PM Eastern Time

Must register in advance [HERE](#).

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Free Veteran Training for Microsoft Software and Systems Academy

via Vantage Point



Gain critical skills and training for a career in the growing technology industry

The Microsoft Software & Systems Academy (MSSA) is offering free Veteran training to military and Veteran community. This free, formal training takes place in some of the technology industry's most in-demand roles. Transitioning service members' and Veterans' experiences often uniquely prepare and qualify them for the skills and security clearances technology companies need.

What is the Microsoft Software & Systems Academy (MSSA)?

MSSA is an industry-leading educational program designed specifically to support members of the military community, including transitioning service members and Veterans, with job skills, training, mentorship and other professional support to successfully transition to a career in technology. Courses and professional networking are offered online, and students can access developed comprehensive learning paths for careers as cloud application developers and server and cloud administrators.

[CLICK HERE](#) to find out more about the Microsoft Software & Systems Academy (MSSA).

What does the MSSA program cover?

MSSA provides 16-17 weeks of online training for high-demand careers in cloud development or cloud administration. MSSA also offers a [Tech](#)

[Transition Toolkit](#) with simple tips for how you can build a career in technology, including how to create a strong resume, learn "tech lingo" to sound like a pro, set up your virtual workspace, use your virtual professional network to your advantage, and learn lessons from MSSA graduates.

[CLICK HERE](#) for stories on MSSA graduates and their careers in technology.

Program graduates have an opportunity to interview for a full-time job at Microsoft. Since MSSA launched in 2013, more than 90% of graduates hired by Microsoft have stayed on the job two years and longer.

MSSA also works with other companies to help them become more "Veteran-ready" rather than just "Veteran-friendly," according to Chris Cortez, vice president of military affairs at Microsoft. Program graduates can interview with one of MSSA's more than 600 hiring partners, many of whom are Fortune 500 companies, to find new career paths in the technology industry. [CLICK HERE](#) to see some of the partner hiring companies.

Who is eligible and what does it cost?

MSSA is free to the military and Veteran community, including transitioning service members.

How to apply

To get started, email MSSAOPS@Microsoft.com for an invite to attend one of the weekly information sessions, a mandatory part of the application process, held every Tuesday at 12:00 and 3:00 (ET).

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details on the MSSA application process and prerequisites.

The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products and services on part of New England PVA or the VA.

Veteran Wellness Classes

NOW offered through VA Video Connect (VVC) or Phone
NO Co-pays

Introduction to Whole Health (1 hour class)

Taking Charge of My Life and Health (9-weekly classes)

Adaptive Yoga (45 min weekly class)

Adaptive Tai Chi (45 min weekly class)

Guided Imagery (45 min weekly class)

VVC Classes

TUESDAYS

Guided Meditation— Yoga “Sleep” @ 5pm

1-404-397-1596 with Access Code 433-794-55

THURSDAYS

Guided Meditation— Yoga “Sleep” @ 8pm

1-866-899-4679 with Access Code 637-876-469

1st & 3rd FRIDAYS—MAR 2021

Mindfulness Meditation Class @ 11am – 12pm

1-800-767-1750 with Access Code 54220#

**Classes by
phone**

Check out online videos:

Videos

[#LIVEWHOLEHEALTH](#)

To learn more and/or schedule an appointment

VA Boston Whole Health @ 857-203-4876

Live Whole Health.



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Patient Centered Care and
Cultural Transformation

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
860-215-4100



www.mobilityworks.com

www.newenglandpva.org

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



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Vehicle Donation Program

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.



Donating your car is easy, and your gift is tax-deductible

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



Rollin' with Gilbo

By Mike Guilbault, Chapter VP and Sports Director

Big changes for the Wheelchair Games have been announced. This year will be the Hybrid version which means there will be two groups of 150 athletes going on different dates depending on their classification and events. There will also be the virtual NVWGatHome option as was held last year. Different groups will have different events although Adaptive Fitness is one that is offered in all 3 groups. More details can be found on the wheelchairgames.org website. Things are still being worked out so will keep you all posted as we learn more. All athletes must visit the registration page and update their registrations by April 30 since some events you registered for may not be an option on the dates for your assigned group.

For those not aware the Golden Age Games in Madison, WI have been cancelled as well as the National Disables Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, CO. There is going to be a virtual NDVWSCatHome option and Teresa Parks has sent out the email about that.

There is our local Summer Sports Clinic scheduled for July 19-23rd in RI and if you have not received an application you can contact Jenny Vulpis the Adaptive Sports Case manager at jenny.vulpis@va.gov or (774) 826-1955 (office) and (617) 990-7581 (VA Cellphone). Coach Jenny is also aware of the changes for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games mentioned.

Sail to Prevail is planning to host a PVA Sail Day Saturday June 26th again this year. If restrictions are lifted by then there is a possibility of it going back to a PVA Weekend with two days of sailing but seeing how slow restrictions are being lifted, I'm grateful to at least have the option for the one-day event.

In order to train for the NVWG and just to be able to stay fit PVA is offering many virtual programs which can be found at <https://pva.org/adaptive-sports/special-events/> In addition to the Virtual Fitness option shown there which I have attended and is intended for wheelchair users and very beneficial to maintaining shoulder health, there is another option which is geared more for the Adaptive Fitness Competition at the Wheelchair Games. Actually, a competition has just started March 11 and although I am not in it for the competition, I will participate in order to train for the Adaptive Fitness event at the NVWG. It is the Adaptive Training Academy that did the training for last years NVWGatHome event, Logan and crew did an outstanding job doing some of the training sessions for last year's event and if you're interested in getting into great shape doing some of the CrossFit workouts I recommend you check it out at <http://open.crossfit.com>

| GROUP ONE | GROUP TWO | 2021 NVWGatHOME |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 9-Ball | 9-Ball | Adaptive Fitness |
| Adaptive Fitness | Adaptive Fitness | Adaptive E-Sports |
| Boccia | Basketball | Air Rifle |
| Disc Golf | Boccia | Bowling |
| Field | Disc Golf | Cycling |
| Motor Rally | Field | Powerlifting |
| Powerlifting | Powerlifting | Swimming |
| Power Soccer | Slalom | Trap Shooting |
| Slalom | Softball | |
| Table Tennis | Table Tennis | |
| WC Rugby | | |

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](#) 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](#).



MARCH CHAPTER MEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

| | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| William J Desmond | Paul D Kenney | Paul A Willey | Frank P Creane | Edward H Thibault |
| Daniel P Ouellette | Jaclynn A Coppola | Richard R Larson | Scott T Horton | James P Tabares |
| Thomas M Conrad | Russell R Tanguay | John W Martignetti | Lawrence A Lavelle | Christopher A Carroll |
| Kenneth W Stidsen | Patrick L Dostie | Gaelen J Saucier | Leo A Balzano | Arthur J Harrington |
| John B Swinerton | Gary A Jones | Jerome T Lindabury | David C Anthony | Leo J Fitzgerald |
| Max A Tait | Lawrence B Harris | Robert A Strickland | Larry E Winger | David J Groskopf |
| Michael P Clancy | Robert J Mazzarella | Terry W Robbins | Steven G Chmielewski | Bob J Barlow |
| William MPemberton | Michael J Pelletier | Lois E Fortin | Winslow M Martson | John K Ross |
| Gerard A Lacroix | Harvey L Nadreau | Dwayne A Paige | Arron R Frankum | Mark S Messina |
| William J Sullivan | Charles T Fisher | Timothy S Warn | Stephen K Valyou | Maceo E Early |
| Davide T Wiggin | Roger V Sala | Richard J Vieira | Theresa M Farrell-Young | John D Osterlitz |



NEPVA BASS Trail Tournament Event Schedule

June 5, 2021: Charles River - Newton Mass. Newton Yacht Club

September 10-12, 2021: Lake Winnepesaukee - Camp Robindel, Moultonborough NH

October 1-3, 2021: North Pond - Camp Pine Tree, Rome, ME

NEPVA Bass Trail will be strictly adhering to each individual State's COVID guidelines. Please check the [Chapter's Bass Trail website page](#) frequently for any registration and Tournament updates.

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



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

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The banner features a green background with a white silhouette of a golfer in mid-swing on the right. On the left, the PVA logo is displayed, consisting of a silhouette of a person in a wheelchair next to the letters 'PVA' in a large, bold, serif font. Below the logo, the text 'Paralyzed Veterans of America' and 'New England Chapter' is written in a smaller, sans-serif font. To the right of the logo, the words 'charity GOLF classic' are written in a mix of white and green fonts. At the bottom of the banner, a dark green horizontal bar contains white text providing contact information for sponsorship and registration, and the date and location of the event.

PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America
New England Chapter

charity
GOLF
classic

For Sponsorship and Registration information
contact Executive Director Mark Murphy
800-660-1181 ext. 2 or mark@newenglandpva.org

Friday, June 11, 2021
FALMOUTH COUNTRY CLUB, FALMOUTH, MA

2021 New England Summer Sports Clinic in Providence Rhode Island

July 19th through the 23th, 2021.

Complete details and registration forms on Chapter website's Summer Sports Clinic page [HERE](#).

**For the most timely Sports and Activities information
please visit the Chapter's website at www.newenglandpva.org or email sports@newenglandpva.org**

Serving Paralyzed Veterans and the Disabled Community Since 1947.