



CORDWORD

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

New England Chapter

AT HOME COMPETITION



INSIDE THIS EDITION

COVID VACCINE RECORD

FREE HELP AT HOME



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Whether you qualify for a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine and need to make an appointment or you're just trying to get into your favorite restaurant, there's a chance that you will need to prove your COVID-19 vaccination status. While you can carry your CDC vaccination card (or a photo of it), here's how to get a copy of your VA COVID-19 vaccine records online.

The best way to access your medical records depends on the type of online account you have and if you want to get your records on your mobile device. Do not [...continued on page 10.](#)



For Veterans who have a spouse, family member, or friend who helps provide them with care and support at home and could use an extra set of hands, The Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Respite Relief Program provides free caregiving support.

This program supports Veterans while giving family caregivers a time for respite so they can run an errand, go for a walk, or simply relax. This free program is available to caregivers of pre- and post-9/11 active-duty service members and Veterans. [...continued on page 19.](#)

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

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PROGRAM DIRECTORS

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ON THE COVER: Brockton VAMC Building 8 SCIU Residents participate in 40th NVWG atHome Competition.

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

In preparation for PVA's Fall Board of Directors' meeting in Orlando, FL our Chapter Board unanimously elected Board member Brad Carlson as Chapter National Director to fill the remainder of the term vacated by me to serve as National Vice President.

With Brad's election he was required to attend National Director training at PVA's national office in Washington, D.C. along with the other newly elected National Directors. I attended this training, as well, as a newly elected National Vice President. The training consisted of two days from 8am to 5pm of organizational policies and procedures, department familiarization, and Director responsibilities. There was also time to meet with the other new Directors over dinner to get to know each other better. This all helps to equip and build a cohesive Board ready to serve PVA and move its mission forward.



With Mike Guilbault's resignation from our Chapter Board, I appointed Brad as our new Sports Director. Brad was the Sports Director prior to Guilbault and so has the experience to easily pickup and regrow our sports program offerings. As a sneak peek, we plan to start a billiards tournament, virtual bowling league, curling club and wheelchair football team to mention just a few. Please keep an eye out for Brad's monthly sports columns in coming editions of the Cord Word! If you happen to have a particular sport or activity you're interested in, please let us know by emailing sports@newenglandpva.org. Whatever it takes to get you active, we'll make it happen. If you need funding assistance, please take advantage of your [Chapter Individual Allotment](#). I'm excited to see what Brad is planning for us!



Something else we're planning is our 75th Annual Chapter Membership Banquet. We're hosting this year's Banquet on **Sunday November 7th from 12:00pm to 5:00pm** at the elegant [Lakeview Pavilion](#) located in Foxborough, MA.

This banquet will be an exclusive "Black Tie & White Tablecloth" Gala with a live Band! We encourage every Veteran to proudly wear and medals and decoration you have received.

Ticket sales will be limited to only 125, so please check the Chapter website for details and be the first to get your tickets when they go on sale!

Finally, September 25th would have been Christopher Reeve's 69th birthday. Reeve sustained C1-C2 spinal cord injury when he was thrown from his horse during an equestrian competition. Like many of us, after sustaining a SCI, Reeve went through intense grief. He eventually decided to make the best of his new life. In 1998, he said during an interview:

"Who knows why an accident happens? The key is what do you do afterwards. There is a period of shock and then grieving with confusion and loss. After that, you have two choices. One is to stare out the window and gradually disintegrate. And the other is to mobilize and use all your resources, whatever they may be, to do something positive."

Before his death on October 25, 2004, Reeve went on to found and lead the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation and co-founding the Reeve-Irvine Research Center.

As I have always said though, it doesn't take a big act or large sums of money to make a difference. Just one small act, sharing a moment of your time or donating whatever you can makes a difference. Simply start with one small gesture and let it grow from there. In doing this, together we can all make a difference.

Michael G. Negrete
PVA National Vice President and
New England Chapter President



**LEARN TO SEE THINGS
FROM DIFFERENT
PERSPECTIVES.
NEVER LIMIT YOURSELF
TO ONE
POINT OF VIEW.**





FROM the HILL

Kristen McCone Gordon, Chapter Government Relations Director

Dear Members,

This month I'm pleased to highlight another NEPVA legislative priority: [The Air Carrier Access Amendments Act of 2021](#). As you will read below, this legislation will improve access to air travel for people with

disabilities.

Please let me know if you have experienced issues with boarding/deboarding planes, in-flight wheelchair storage, or general problems with airlines related to your disability. Many NEPVA members have shared their personal experiences on this issue with me, and it's been incredibly helpful in my conversations with our members of Congress. The more personal experiences I can share from constituents, the more likely we are to pass this bill.

Please take a few minutes to [take action](#) on this issue, and encourage your friends and families to do the same. I look forward to updating you on our collective progress.

Sincerely,

Kristen McCone Gordon

Background

Nearly thirty-five years ago, President Ronald Reagan signed the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) into law. The ACAA prohibits disability-based discrimination in air travel. Prior to passage of the ACAA, people with disabilities were routinely forced to travel with an attendant at their own expense, even if they did not need assistance to fly safely; required to sit on a blanket for fears that they might soil the passenger seat; or simply refused passage. The ACAA has provided passengers with disabilities improved consistency in air travel. Through this law, air carriers must provide passengers with disabilities the opportunity to preboard, if additional time or assistance is needed in boarding the aircraft; timely assistance in boarding and deplaning; proper stowage of assistive devices; and appropriate seating accommodations.

Although the ACAA led to improvements in the air travel experience for passengers with disabilities, the process is far from seamless and is, at times, dangerous. PVA members routinely report incurring bodily harm in boarding and deplaning aircraft, and their wheelchairs, particularly power wheelchairs, are often damaged while stowed. In addition, members have expressed difficulty in receiving appropriate seating accommodations on aircraft and often encounter air carrier personnel and contractors who

are not appropriately trained in assisting passengers with significant disabilities. As a result, some people with disabilities would rather drive long distances than risk personal injury or damage to their mobility devices.

Many of the difficulties that travelers with disabilities encounter in air travel are not sufficiently addressed by the ACAA and its implementing regulations. For example, the ACAA does not require aircraft to provide even basic accessibility, such as access to lavatories, a path of travel, or seating accommodations for passengers with disabilities who use wheelchairs. Unlike most other civil rights laws, the ACAA lacks a guaranteed private right of action. Enforcement is limited to administrative processes that provide passengers with disabilities limited redress of their grievances.

PVA Position

To improve access to air travel, Congress must pass the "Air Carrier Access Amendments Act," H.R. 1696/S. 642, would address these problems by:

- Strengthening ACAA administrative enforcement and establishing a private right of action.
- Ensuring 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, lavatories, and better stowage options for assistive devices.
- Requiring removal of access barriers on existing airplanes to the extent that it is readily achievable – easily accomplishable and may be done without much difficulty or expense.

How can New England PVA members help?

Join our efforts by contacting your Representative today. Please fill out your contact information [HERE](#) and ask your friends and family to do the same!



Protect Your Benefits by Reporting Scams and Fraud

By Tracy Davis Bradley via VAntage Point



A few bad actors are seeking to take advantage of Veterans and VA during this challenging time through fraud schemes, scams and other illegal or unethical activities, including fraud, waste, and abuse.

“If something seems too good to be true, it probably is,” said Tracy Davis Bradley, VHA’s acting Chief Integrity and Compliance Officer. “Veterans who see something that doesn’t feel right should report it.”

Veterans should be aware of common scams that seek to gain access to the medical and financial benefits they earned through military service, including:

- Identity Theft
- Phishing
- Imposter Scams
- Coronavirus Scams
- Investment Opportunities

- Loan Deceptions
- Benefits Schemes

VA does not make unsolicited calls asking for Veterans’ private secure information, such as a Social Security Number, and VA never asks for payment to confirm an appointment.

Ways to protect yourself

- Protect yourself. Do not give out your personal information or respond to emails or text messages about COVID-19 from unknown individuals.
- Stay Informed. Check your local VA medical center web page or VA’s COVID-19 page for vaccine testing and distribution information.
- Check your medical bills regularly. Keep a record of all medical expenses and report any errors or suspicious claims immediately to VA or your Third-Party Administrator.

Ultimately, scams targeting Veterans impact the entire Veteran community and VA’s ability to provide quality care and benefit delivery. VA takes reports of fraud and scams very seriously and investigates these reports to protect all Veterans. By speaking up, Veterans can protect themselves and their comrades in arms.

Reporting fraud, waste, and abuse

All suspected criminal activity should be reported to the VA Office of Inspector General (OIG):

Email the VA OIG Hotline: vaoighotline@va.gov

Fax the VA OIG: (202) 565-7936

Call the VA OIG: (800) 488-8244

Veterans who suspect they’ve been the target of fraud can call the Office of Integrity and Compliance Help Line 24/7 at (866) 842-4357 (VHA-HELP) or email vhacbihelpline@va.gov for assistance and guidance.

Tracy Davis Bradley is acting chief integrity and compliance officer, VHA Office of Integrity and Compliance.

YOUR INVITED: CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS - ONLINE or IN-PERSON

Chapter members interested in attending our monthly Board of Director’s meeting, either online or in-person, may do so by sending an email request with your full name and address to meetings@newenglandpva.org requesting a “BOD Meeting Invite”. For Online access you will receive the meeting connection information via email a few days before the meeting. If asking to attend In-Person, you will receive the Chapter’s COVID-19 office access policies and protocols.

The regular monthly Board meetings are typically held the first Wednesday of the month and start at 10:45 AM. As with all Board meetings, Chapter members are encouraged to attend, but please be reminded you’ll have the opportunity to listen-in to the meeting’s discussions, but reserved from speaking unless specifically called upon.

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



NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

August 7–14, 2021 • New York, NY



atHOME



How to Get your COVID-19 Vaccine Records Online

via VAntage Point



Whether you qualify for a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine and need to make an appointment or you're just trying to get into your favorite restaurant, there's a chance that you will need to prove your COVID-19 vaccination status. While you can carry your CDC vaccination card (or a photo of it), here's how to get a copy of your VA COVID-19 vaccine records online.

The best way to access your medical records depends on the type of online account you have and if you want to get your records on your mobile device. Do not register for a new account if you already have a Basic or Advanced My HealtheVet account.

Get your records from My HealtheVet with a premium account

If you have a premium My HealtheVet account, you can download or share a copy of your vaccine records through My HealtheVet. This option works best on a desktop or laptop.

Sign in to My HealtheVet with your premium account.

1. Click on Health Records.
 2. Click on either VA Blue Button Report or VA Health Summary. You can choose either or both.
 3. Download or share your information.
- For VA Blue Button: Select a date range to include in your report. For the type of information, select VA Immunizations. Your report will list each dose of your COVID-19 vaccine separately. After you submit your request, you'll receive links to a PDF and a plain text version of your report to download.
 - For VA Health Summary: To get started, select Immunizations from the table of contents. You can't edit the date range or type of vaccine information you want to include in the report. After you submit your request, you'll receive links to a PDF and an XML file version

of your report to download. Each file will contain a list of all your immunizations. An XML file can be read by computers.

[Sign in to My HealtheVet](#)

[Upgrade your My HealtheVet account to premium](#)

View your records on your mobile device with a connected app

With an online account, you can connect and share your VA health records to a non-VA connected (or third-party) health app. Once connected, you can then access and share your vaccine records from the app on your mobile device.

Follow these steps to connect and share your records to an app:

1. Find the app you want to use, like Apple Health for iPhone or CommonHealth for Android devices, on the app store for your mobile device.
2. When the app prompts you to connect your VA account, it will ask you to sign in.
3. Sign in with your preferred account: My HealtheVet, DS Logon, or ID.me. If you don't have one of these accounts, you can [create a verified ID.me account](#) now.
4. Review the information the app is requesting to access. If you're comfortable sharing that information, click "allow access."

[Find VA connected apps you can use](#)

[Create a verified ID.me account](#)

Find out what to do if you have trouble with the app

- If you have trouble connecting to the chosen app: Contact the app's support for help.
- If you have trouble signing in to your account: [Read our frequently asked questions about signing in to VA.gov.](#)
- If your health records are missing: It can take up to 36 hours for new health records to appear. This gives your health care provider time to discuss results with you first.

If it's been more than 3 days since your last appointment, or if you need your information sooner, contact your VA health care team.

- If your information isn't accurate: Call our MyVA411 main information line at 800-698-2411 (TTY: 711). You can also ask a staff member a VA health facility near you for help. [Find a VA health facility near you.](#)
- If you get an "unreadable data" message: This means the connected app has access to your information but doesn't use it in its interface. This is nothing to worry about. If you have questions about this, send feedback directly to the app.

Live Whole Health #85: Stillness in busy times with Yin meditation

By Alison M. Whitehead, MPH, C-IAYT via Vantage Point



When our days feel overly busy or stressful it can be nice to slow down and find moments of stillness. There are many ways to do that throughout the day, even if just for a minute or two. Here are a few ideas:

- Take a slow mindful walk/stroll in nature.
- Take a pause and a few slow, deep breaths.
- Find a peaceful spot in nature to sit and soak in the natural beauty.
- Take some time to read a relaxing book, collection of poetry, or other favorites.
- Do some gentle stretching or take a gentle yoga or tai chi class.

Another way to find stillness can be through meditation. There are many different styles of meditation. Some are more energizing while others are more calming. Some types of meditation focus on the breath or

sensations in the body. Yin meditation encourages being open to what might unfold during the experience of the practice. A yin meditation helps us to be curious, open, and gentle towards our inner experience and can support self-compassion. Yin meditation can help us to slow down and cultivate a sort of fluid stillness, like a still pool of water.

VA's Whole Health approach incorporates self-care techniques, including mindfulness, to help you find stillness and to be more conscious of your thoughts and feelings. This type of practice can help with relaxation, processing grief and improving focus. To learn more about mindfulness, visit <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/veteran-handouts/index.asp>.

Each of us has the power to impact our well-being. Whole Health offers the skills and support you need to make the changes you want. The Circle of Health can get you started with self-care resources to live a happier life: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/index.asp>.

Alison M. Whitehead, MPH, C-IAYT is the program lead for the Integrative Health Coordinating Center in the VHA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation.

Live Whole Health #86: Tai Chi and physical movement

By Alison M. Whitehead, MPH, C-IAYT via Vantage Point



Physical activity, whether done sitting or standing, uses your energy to move the large muscles in your body. Different activities produce different benefits: increasing strength, flexibility, endurance or mobility. But the benefits

aren't only physical. Movement can help energize us while also helping to reduce stress. Even a few extra minutes of activity each day has potential benefits for improving your health. An important consideration for any exercise or physical activity program is how we listen to our bodies to sense or notice how we are feeling when we do different movements.

Try this, seated or standing, with your feet planted on the floor, and then begin to just lift your heels. What do you notice? Perhaps a sensation in the calf muscles in the lower legs? Maybe you notice something else. Maybe even a lack of sensation in the calf muscles. Now lift one foot off the floor at a time with your knee bent, as though you were slowly walking in place. What do you notice now? Are your core muscles engaging? Or perhaps your quadricep muscles in your thighs? If helpful, close your eyes to really feel the sensations in the body as you move.

One way to develop this mindful awareness of the body is by engaging in complementary and integrative health (CIH) movement practices such as tai chi. Tai Chi is a gentle mind-body practice combining slow-flowing

intentional movements with breathing, awareness and visualization. Rooted in the Asian traditions of martial arts, Chinese medicine and philosophy, tai chi enhances relaxation, vitality, focus, posture, balance, strength, flexibility and mood. Tai Chi can be done in a small space without any additional equipment, and movements can be done standing or seated.

Tai Chi is one of the complementary and integrative health (CIH) approaches within the VA Whole Health System of care included in the Veterans medical benefits package when deemed clinically necessary by a Veteran's care team.

For more information on staying physically active by the VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, visit: https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Physically_Active.asp.

For more information and tips on Moving Your Body through the Whole Health Components of Health and Well-Being, visit: <https://www.va.gov/WHOLEHEALTH/circle-of-health/moving-body.asp>.

Alison M. Whitehead, MPH, C-IAYT is the program lead for the Integrative Health Coordinating Center in the VHA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation.

PVA WASHINGTON UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

PVA Washington Update Volume 27, Number 15

Update on PVA's Advocacy to Strengthen VA Benefits for Disabled Veterans and Their Survivors

PVA continues its advocacy to strengthen benefits for catastrophically disabled veterans as we ease into the final months of the first session of the 117th Congress. Support for legislation that would increase the number of times veterans can access the Automobile Allowance grant and ensure veterans receive much needed Automotive Adaptive Equipment has, for the most part, plateaued. The AUTO for Veterans Act, H.R. 1361/S. 444, which would provide additional auto grants for service-connected veterans, have 33 and 10 sponsors/cosponsors (respectively). H.R. 3304, the CARS for Vets Act, which would not only provide additional auto grants for service-connected veterans but also codify existing VA support for ingress and egress assistance for non-service-connected veterans, remains steady with just three sponsors/cosponsors. We have been working steadily with the bill's authors and staff from the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees on this legislation. The main barrier is the cost of the improvements and the need for the Committees to locate a spending offset to pay for them.

We are also working on new legislation that would raise rates for VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grant program and tie them to a formula that will help keep this program's payments relevant in years to come. It has been a dozen years since HISA rates were last raised; so, the program's grants often fall short of what veterans need to make medically necessary modifications to their homes.

Finally, the Justice for ALS Veterans Act should soon be introduced in the House. This legislation would extend increased Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits commonly known as the "DIC Kicker" to the surviving spouse of a veteran who dies from ALS regardless of how long the veteran had the disease prior to death. Under current law, the higher rate of DIC is only payable if the veteran was rated totally disabled for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death.

Status of Annual Funding Bills

September 30 marks the end of the federal fiscal year. As of now, the House has passed nine of the 12 annual funding bills while the Senate has passed none. With only a handful of legislative days remaining in the fiscal year and no House-Senate agreements on spending, lawmakers' only choice is to pass a continuing resolution (CR). A CR would keep the government operating using current year spending levels. Passage of a

CR may be trickier this year because some lawmakers are sizing the bill up as a potential vehicle to increase the country's debt ceiling. Although the exact content and length of the temporary funding measure are unknown, some have suggested it may last up to three months to give both chambers time to come up with a more formal spending plan.

Five-Month Wait for SSDI Eliminated for Individuals with ALS

On August 27, the Social Security Administration issued a final rule implementing the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019. This final rule eliminates the five-month waiting period for the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) who were approved for SSDI benefits on or after July 23, 2020. Under the SSDI program, most individuals who have been

found to be disabled are subject to a five-month waiting period before they are entitled to their first payment. The waiting period begins with the first full month the individual meets all the eligibility factors covered by the application and ends five months after that date. The full final rule as published in the Federal Register can be found [HERE](#).

Accessible Transportation State Legislative Update

A new article from the National Conference of State Legislatures provides recent information on state laws and programs that promote accessible

practices and provide mobility options. To view, please click [HERE](#).

TSA Extends Face Mask Requirement Through January

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is extending the face mask requirement for individuals across all transportation networks throughout the United States, including at airports, onboard commercial aircraft, on over-the-road buses, and on commuter bus and rail systems through January 18, 2022. Airline travelers should check with their airline on additional inflight restrictions prior to taking their trip. All commuters

and travelers should check the [Centers for Disease Control's website](#) for additional guidance. Exemptions to the face mask requirement for travelers under the age of 2 years old and those with certain disabilities remain in place.

VA Will Resume Copayment Collections October 1

In March 2021, the American Rescue Plan included a provision that canceled VA copayments for medical care and pharmacy services received between April 6, 2020, and September 30, 2021. On May 12, VA

began mailing letters to each veteran with information on refunds, timing of when informational patient statements will resume, and when VA will begin normal collection of copayments.

VA Appeal Forms Rejected in Error

Recently, the Board of Veterans' Appeals [announced](#) that a limited number of veterans may have had their Board Appeal forms [VA Form 10182, Decision Review Request: Board Appeal (Notice of Disagreement)] mistakenly rejected for being untimely. If you filed a VA Form 10182 with the Board between February 19, 2019, and March 23, 2021, and believe it may have been improperly rejected as untimely, please send a letter to the "Clerk of the Board" at P.O. Box 27063, Washington, DC 20038 or via fax to 1-844-678-8979 no later than March 1, 2022. In your letter, state

you are asking the Board to "RECALCULATE TIMELINESS" and be careful to include your full name, claim number or SSN, the date of the rating decision you appealed to the Board, and the date of your original VA Form 10182 appeal form that the Board told you was untimely. As always, we highly recommend that you bring any questions regarding your claim or appeal action to the attention of your service officer.

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Approves Spending Recommendations

On September 13, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee approved its recommendations for VA spending in the proposed reconciliation package by a vote of 17-12. A recently agreed to [Budget Resolution](#) restricted the Committee to no more than \$18 billion of new VA spending in the package; so, they decided \$15.2 billion of that amount should go directly towards VA's immediate and long-term infrastructure needs. Another \$1.8 billion would allow VA to lease much-needed facilities including several Community Based Outpatient Clinics. The Committee also put \$375 million towards VA's education and training program which will allow the department to increase the number of health professions residency positions by up to 700 over the next seven years. The remaining amount of the projected \$18 billion will give VA greater ability to use its

Enhanced-Use Lease authority to lease underutilized VA property (\$455 million), digitally scan veteran service records held at National Archives and Records Administration (\$155 million), and allow the VA Office of Inspector General to provide oversight of VA projects and activities generated by spending in the package (\$15 million). Several amendments to the pre-coordinated package were offered during the markup session, but none were adopted. They included a proposal by Representative Madison Cawthorn (R-NC) to insert language granting eligible veterans a second automobile allowance. The hearing was recorded, and you can click [HERE](#) to watch it.



TRB Issues Report on the Feasibility of Wheelchair Securement Systems on Passenger Aircraft

via www.access-board.gov/news/

In the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act, Congress called on the U.S. Access Board to examine the feasibility of wheelchair securement systems for passenger use in airplane cabins. In response, the Access Board commissioned the Transportation Research Board (TRB), of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, to conduct a study and issue a report. TRB organized a committee to conduct this assessment that included experts in aircraft interiors and safety engineering, accessibility, wheelchair design and crashworthiness, airline operations, and other disciplines. The committee's findings are contained in their report [Technical Feasibility of a Wheelchair Securement Concept for Airline Travel: A Preliminary Assessment](#) (PDF, 6MB).

According to the report, the committee did not identify any design or engineering challenges that would likely call into question the technical feasibility of an in-cabin wheelchair securement system. The report provides a preliminary assessment of the technical issues and recommends actions to fill gaps in technical information needed for more definitive assessments of feasibility and for public policy considerations about the systems to expand air travel opportunities for people with disabilities.

The report documents several findings:

- a large majority of airplanes have a main boarding door that is wide

enough to accommodate most personal wheelchairs;

- most common cabin interior dimensions and layouts for the two most ubiquitous families of airplanes, the Boeing 737 and the Airbus A320, should require only modest interior modifications to create a wheelchair securement area located at the front of the cabin near the turn from the main boarding door; and
- many personal wheelchairs, including power wheelchairs, comply with motor vehicle transportation safety and crash performance standards (WC19) for wheelchairs established by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA), providing a widely available and standardized interface for an in-cabin wheelchair tiedown and occupant restraint system.

The report recommends that the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) establish a program of research, in collaboration with RESNA and the assistive technology industry, to test and evaluate an appropriate selection of WC19-compliant wheelchairs in accordance with applicable FAA crashworthiness and safety performance criteria. It also recommends that the Access Board sponsor further studies to assess the likely demand for air travel by people who prefer to remain seated in their personal wheelchairs on flights.

The report is also available from [National Academies Press](#).

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



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

Email: support.indego@parker.com

Phone: 844-846-3346





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 • [t](#) [@](#) PVA1946

America250: Veterans, Active duty, Reserve, Guard can submit photos for November Salute

via Vantage Point



Veterans, active duty service members, Reservists, and Guard members can submit photos online Sept. 15-Oct. 20 as part of the America250 November Salute.

People can submit photos online at america250.org/november-salute.

July 4, 2026, marks 250 years of [independence](#). America250 will combine this year's submissions with the over 700 photos collected as part of the America250 November Salute 2020 initiative. They will use all photos to create a photo mosaic installation for Veterans Day 2021. In addition to the art installation, the photo mosaic will also be available for viewing through an interactive online gallery, where people can explore and find out more about the people and stories represented.

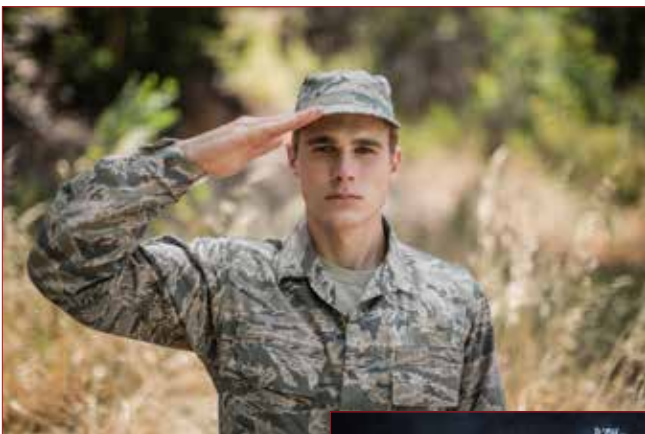
America250 will use these images to create a photo mosaic honoring those who served. In addition to the art installation, the photo mosaic will also be available for viewing through an interactive online gallery,

where you can explore and find out more about the people and stories represented.

The People's Picture, a female-led photography and design studio based in the U.S. and United Kingdom, will create the mosaic. They create photo mosaic artworks and installations at the leading edge of design and technology. Their mission is to use digital storytelling to bring communities together to create, celebrate, and own their unique legacy.

Share November Salute submissions using the following form and guidelines:

- Use the form to upload your photos and share your stories (the "Submission").
- Please frame the photo clearly with head and shoulders.
- Please do not take part if you are under 18.
- All Submissions will be checked and moderated to ensure that they are appropriate. You will be notified by email if your photo has been approved. If approved, your submission will become part of the mosaic and interactive gallery.
- Please make sure you own all aspects of the Submission or have asked permission to submit it and that you have permission from all person(s) featured in the Submission.



Fruits, Vegetables and Prebiotics: A tasty way to a healthy gut

By Bethany Oxender, Registered Dietitian via Vantage Point



The reasons to eat fruits and vegetables are plentiful. They provide fiber, are generally low in calories, and are packed with vitamins and minerals. But that’s only the tip of the iceberg. Less often discussed is their prebiotic component, a valuable ingredient that is essential for a healthy gut.

Prebiotics are special plant fibers, or the roughage of food. Our bodies cannot digest them. Instead, the fiber travels through our intestinal tract, and in doing so, creates a welcoming home for good bacteria – called probiotics – to survive and thrive.

Probiotics protect us by acting as a barrier from harmful substances, viruses, fungi, and the more dangerous bacteria that we ingest. Without prebiotics, the probiotics we eat (from yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut or other fermented foods) may die off.

Some foods with prebiotics

Some foods known to contain high amounts of prebiotics include apples, artichokes, asparagus, bananas, berries, green vegetables, legumes, onions, tomatoes and garlic.

Foods found on grocery shelves may also have added prebiotics to boost their fiber content, including certain cereals, granola bars, cookies and yogurt. It is not always clearly stated if prebiotics are added, but there are other ways to find out.

Look for these terms in the ingredients list: galactooligosaccharides, fructooligosaccharides, oligofructose, chicory fiber or inulin.

It’s a good idea to introduce prebiotic foods gradually to avoid potential

stomach discomfort. For example, start by adding an extra serving of fruits and vegetables a day to help meet your needs.

You can eat them raw as snacks, like replacing a mid-day sweet with a fresh banana or crunchy apple. Sauté vegetables with your morning eggs or skewer them with a protein for savory kabobs. Keep frozen options on hand for busier days when cooking isn’t feasible.

If you’re hesitant about the taste of certain vegetables, remember that the cooking technique can completely change the flavor. Oven-roasting caramelizes the surface of vegetables, making them less bitter.

You’ll be an expert before you know it

Experimenting to discover new foods to enjoy is half the fun, even if a few pots and pans are scorched in the process.

VA’s Healthy Cooking at Home Cookbook has many recipe ideas to get you started. If you’re interested in learning more on this, or any other nutrition-related topic, contact your local VA to speak with a registered dietitian.

Bethany Oxender is a registered dietitian who specializes in weight management at the Ann Arbor VA Healthcare System. She is a frequent contributor to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics publication, Food & Nutrition Magazine.



You Asked, We Answered: What should I know about additional COVID-19 vaccine doses?

via VAntage Point



For this week's "You asked, we answered," VHA discusses additional vaccine doses.

I've heard about people receiving additional doses and booster shots of COVID-19 vaccines. Is there a difference between these kinds of shots?

[Yes, there is a difference.](#) An additional third dose of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is appropriate for people who may not have had a strong enough immune response after receiving the first two doses.

A booster shot is appropriate for people whose immune response may have weakened over time since becoming fully vaccinated.

How do I know if I should receive a third dose?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people with weakened immune systems who received either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine should receive a third dose of the same vaccine.

You can consult with your health care provider and review a [list of conditions](#) to see if you may be eligible for a third dose.

How do I know if I can receive a booster shot?

The Department of Health and Human Services has [developed a plan](#) to begin offering booster shots to all Americans in mid-September 2021. Once the United States Food and Drug Administration authorizes COVID-19 vaccine booster doses and CDC recommends their use, VA will offer them.

What if I received Johnson & Johnson's Janssen Vaccine?

Experts are currently working to confirm whether people with weakened immune systems who received a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine would benefit from a second dose.

HHS is also developing a plan to provide booster shots of the Johnson & Johnson Janssen vaccine for all Americans.

If you received a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine, you should expect further guidance regarding additional shots and booster shots in the coming weeks.

Keep an eye out for more answers to your COVID-19 and vaccine questions. And remember to follow good health habits in the meantime. To keep it simple, follow the three W's: wear your masks, wash your hands, and watch your distance from others!

References

[COVID-19 Booster Shots And Additional Doses | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People | CDC](#)

[Joint Statement from HHS Public Health and Medical Experts on COVID-19 Booster Shots | CDC Online Newsroom | CDC](#)



Free Help at Home for Veterans from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation

via Vantage Point



For Veterans who have a spouse, family member, or friend who helps provide them with care and support at home and could use an extra set of hands, [The Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Respite Relief Program](#) provides free caregiving support.

This program supports Veterans while giving family caregivers a time for respite so they can run an errand, go for a walk, or simply relax. This free program is available to caregivers of pre- and post-9/11 active-duty service members and Veterans.

Elizabeth Dole Foundation Respite Relief Program

Services are often provided within the home. They can be arranged for as little as an afternoon, or for several days or weeks. Through the Respite Relief Program, a caregiver can receive 35-hours of free respite care services provided by a trusted CareLinx professional.

Respite Care Includes:

- Housekeeping
- Meal prep
- Transportation
- Companionship
- Medication reminders
- Bathing
- Exercise
- Mobility
- Toileting

- Grooming

What happens after you submit an application

Once the caregiver submits an application at hiddenheroes.org/respite, the paperwork will be reviewed and the caregiver will be notified about eligibility by email within seven business days. Once notified, CareLinx will reach out to the caregiver and perform a quick, easy assessment to match that person with the right CareLinx care provider. The caregiver will then receive instructions about how to book the respite hours. Please note, there may be a 4-6 week gap in services depending on location.

This program would not have been possible without the support from VA, CareLinx, Generali, Wounded Warrior Project, AARP, Tranquility® Incontinence Products, Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, Bob Woodruff Foundation, and USAA.

Apply for free respite in less than 10 minutes at <https://hiddenheroes.org/respite>.

The foundation is currently only accepting one application per caregiver per year. For questions, please contact respiterelief@elizabethdolefoundation.org.



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.



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USA's largest accessible van dealer!

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Gray, ME 04039
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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
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www.newenglandpva.org

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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.

Did You Know That Paralyzed US Veterans May be Eligible For a ReWalk Exoskeleton?

Contact ReWalk for More Information

**rewalk.com/contact
or 508.251.1154 Option 2**

What is *Your* Mission?

Whether your goals include experiencing the proven health-related benefits of exoskeleton assisted walking, standing to hug a loved one or completing an entire marathon, ReWalk can you help you achieve them.

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Robotics

Save the Date

Sunday

November 7, 2021

12:00pm to 5:00pm

75th Annual Chapter
Membership Banquet

Exclusive Black Tie

White Tablecloth Event

Live Music by the Band "Riff-Raff"

Limited Ticket Sales of 125

To be held at the elegant

Lakewood Pavilion

Foxborough, MA

Watch Chapter Website for Details!

SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

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Bernice H Pacitto
Steven M Kopka
Preston C Wheaton
Lawrence F Daley
Marsha A Kelly
Riza P Turkson
Robert E Buzby
Donald W Hume
Garry E Tillson
Oliver C Allen
Steven M Dunwoody
Karen W Bottary
Russell E Schaff
Clarence W Dyer
Albert J Maberry
Daniel R Handy

Mark E Sanders
Joseph A Rocca
Douglas E Norvell
Bryan R Nutting
Timothy J Ahern
Leslie F Hildreth
Brian S Checket
George D Iverson
Bradley T Mozuch
Paul S Moore
John E Brault
Gary A Jezierski
Raymond E Thompson
Marguerite R Weaver
Peter H Bleau
Gary T Kolesar
Tamara L Fee

James P Crosby
Robert L Hill
James L Haskins
Bruce J Andrade
Jennifer E Green
Roger R Ledoux
Michael E Moran
Christopher E Geckler
John A Rogers
Carl J Schoener
Rachel S Putnam
James C Barnes
Michael R Beauregard
Thomas V Sawyer
Joseph E Mousseau
Peter J Ricotta
James T Howard

Albert J Kolesinski
Thomas K Gehan
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Abdul Pearson
Higinio Laureano
David M Oates
Steven R Chartier
Malcolm R Smith
Jennifer L Russell
Paul C Pescarmona
Walter F Petig
Alicia M Stewart

PVA Unveils New TV Public Service Announcement “Honor the Spot”

PVA Communications Dept.



For 75 years, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) has advocated and worked to create a more accessible America for not only paralyzed veterans but all people with disabilities. Accessible parking is crucial to the independence of people with disabilities, and each one of us plays a part in keeping these public spaces available.

Honor the Spot reminds people across the nation that accessible spaces are a civil right for people with disabilities and should be respected.

Download and play this public service announcement at psadirect.com/pva to remind your audience to Honor the Spot.

For more information about how Paralyzed Veterans of America is working to create a more accessible America, visit www.PVA.org/HonorTheSpot.

Thank you in advance for your support of Paralyzed Veterans of America. If you have any questions regarding PSA formats or media distribution, please contact us at PVA@PSAdirect.com.

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F 857-203-9685

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www.newenglandpva.org

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



~ Save the Date ~

75th Annual Chapter Membership Banquet

~ Sunday, November 7, 2021 ~

12:00pm to 5:00pm

Watch www.newenglandpva.org for details!

Serving Paralyzed Veterans and the Disabled Community Since 1947.