

## Making a Difference for Our Members

by Brad Carlson, President NEPVA

As we embrace the warmth of the summer season and reflect on the journey we have undertaken together so far this year as a Chapter, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and dedication of our incredible community of veterans, volunteers, staff, Board members, and supporters. Over the past months, we at the New England PVA have continued to fulfill our unique mission of honoring and supporting our nation's most catastrophically injured veterans in meaningful and impactful ways. From providing vital resources and services to those in need and advocating for policy changes that benefit our members and their families like we just did at this month's PVA Annual Advocacy and Legislative Seminar in Washington D.C., our collective efforts have made a profound difference in the lives of our members.

As we look ahead to the coming months, we are filled with excitement for the opportunities that lie ahead, like the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in New Orleans in July, our Chapter golf tournament in Au-

gust, and our Membership cookout and gathering in September. Through these and other initiatives, we will renew our commitment to expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and ensuring that each Chapter member receives the support they deserve.

I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our Chapter's success. Whether through your time, talents, or financial support (or all three!), your generosity has made it possible for us to continue serving those who have served our country. I also want to extend a special thank you to our dedicated staff members in Mark Murphy and Kris-

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*We will always continue to be united  
in support of our members by honoring  
their sacrifice and ensuring that  
they receive the care, respect, and  
gratitude they are due.*

## Join Us Outside this Summer

**VA Summer Sports Clinic**  
July 22-26, Rhode Island

**National Veterans Wheelchair  
Games, July 25-30, New Orleans**

**NEPVA Chapter Golf Tournament**  
August 19, Hingham, MA



Senator Markey(MA) with Kristen, Mark, Brad, Gary and Chapter volunteer Denise Pease.

Chapter Virtual Town Hall on Monday, July 1st

The PVA Medical Services team is planning a site survey to the West Roxbury VA SCI/D Center and Brockton Long-Term Care Center on July 9-11, 2024. In preparation for that visit, we will be hosting a virtual Town Hall via Zoom on Monday, July 1st at 11:00AM. The feedback you provide at this Town Hall will be critical to the success of PVA's site survey. They are interested in top concerns, challenges, and positive feedback regarding the care that you and our Chapter have received over this past year at the VA. We hope you can join us, and here is the Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88421598451?pwd=fBugiSHbVgB0QNgBtHaDOQQ7h9kGAq.1>



NEPVA on Capital Hill

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**NEPVA ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**  
1208 VFW Parkway, Ste 301,  
West Roxbury, MA 02132  
Telephone: (617) 942-8678, 1-(800) 660-1181  
FAX: (857) 203-9685;  
Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:30pm

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Executive Director's Report

By Mark Murphy

Executive Director NEPVA

Dear Friends,

From June 10-13th I was honored to join our Chapter delegation at the 2024 PVA Advocacy/Legislation Seminary in Washington D.C. with the theme Pushing Access Forward. Our team consisted of Chapter President and National Director Brad Carlson and his wife Kathy, Chapter Board of Director Gary Jezierski, Chapter volunteer Denise Pease, and Chapter Director of Government and Community Affairs Kristen McCone Gordon. The week was quite impactful as we advocated for the health and quality of life needs and issues for our members, so for my article this month I would like to primarily focus on the highlights of our trip.

On the first day of the Seminar, we had a full day of training to prepare for our Capitol Hill meetings later in the week. We learned in extensive detail about the 2024 PVA National policy priorities, which included;

- Protecting access to VA's specialized health care services,
- Expanding access to VA long-term services and supports,
- Improving VA benefits and health care services for paralyzed veterans and their survivors,
- Protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities,
- Improving access to social security benefits, and
- Increasing employment prospects for veterans with disabilities.



Meeting with Congressman Amo (RI)

We learned about specific and current bills that relate to all these issues, including the Veterans Accessibility Act, Justice for ALS Veterans Act, Veterans Infertility Treatment Act, Disability Employment Act, the Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act, Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act, the VETS Safe Travel Act, and the Stop the Wait Act. This training was very helpful to us as we prepared to go to Capitol Hill for 2 days of articulating the needs of our members and their families and caregivers.

Over the next 2 days on Capitol Hill, we had several meetings with New England legislators or their staff, including with Congresswoman Clark (from my home district), Senator Blumenthal, Congresswoman DeLauro, Congressman Amo, Senator Markey, Senator Murphy (no relation), and Congresswoman Trahan. These in-person meetings are of course an extension of our year-round advocacy, but the Annual PVA Seminar is an opportunity to meet with our legislators at the very place where the laws we are advocating for are passed. It is a unique opportunity to build relationships with our local members of Congress, and I

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Meeting with Senator Murphy (CT)



NEPVA Members invited to participate in a documentary on the 2024 election

The National Disability Rights Network, a leading national disability rights organization, is working on a documentary short that will tell the stories of voters with disabilities in the lead up to the 2024 presidential election. We will be doing interviews in Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Virginia and the District of Columbia. We want to capture the issues that motivate voters with disabilities and paint a rich picture of their lives, because our community, despite being over 25% of the American population it's often ignored by politicians.

We are seeking to get a look at the home life and day-to-day of voters with disabilities so we can connect the political issues that matter to their daily life. Interviews would take approximately two to three hours. We want to conduct the interview and film footage to complement it. For example: navigating to work, arranging paratransit, going over how much their healthcare costs or showing any durable medical equipment they use, explaining how a home health aide would enable them to experience greater independence.

The goal of this project is to highlight the biggest minority group that often gets ignored by the candidates of all parties. The project is strictly nonpartisan. We are

seeking to ensure we have a diverse range of perspectives included in terms of the issues that matter and the life experience those voters come with.

We want to capture the issues that motivate voters with disabilities and paint a rich picture of their lives...

We are looking to speak to first time and longtime voters, we want to interview those fresh out of school (and even graduating seniors) as well as people who have spent a long time in the workforce or even found themselves excluded from the workforce. We want to speak to voters with disabilities of all stripes and capture the diversity of our community.

If you are interested, please contact us at [storytelling@ndrn.org](mailto:storytelling@ndrn.org). We look forward to working with you to help politicians understand that our community cannot be ignored any longer. Please note that, following documentary film making best practices, we are unable to pay interview participants.

Executive Director's Report

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I am very proud of how we advocated for our members that they may have equitable access to the same opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans.

With that, it is hard to believe that very soon we as a nation will celebrate July 4th, which is a day synonymous with freedom and independence. For veterans, July 4th holds a special significance. It is a day to honor not

only the ideals upon which our nation was founded, but also the men and women who have bravely defended these ideals throughout history. From the battlefields of the Revolutionary War to the present day, veterans have answered the call to protect and preserve the freedoms we all hold dear. As members and supporters of a premier and respected Veterans Service Organization, we understand the importance of remembering and honoring our fellow service mem-

bers, both past and present. We know the sacrifices they have made, the challenges they have faced, and the unwavering commitment they have shown to duty, honor, and country. May you and yours have a blessed 4th of July holiday!

Sincerely,

Mark Murphy, Executive Director

From the President's Desk

continued from page 1

ten McCone Gordon, key volunteers like my wife Kathy, Denise Pease, Holly Warsaw, Denise Harvey, Jim Clark, and Mitch Fishman, and our Board of Directors, who are all working tirelessly behind the scenes to bring our mission to life. Their passion, dedication, and commitment inspire us all to strive for excellence each day.

On Monday, June 17th I was thrilled to be joined by Mark Murphy, Holly Warshaw, Jim Clark, and my friend Bobby at the Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) Post 45 Annual Golf Tournament at Juniper Hills in Northborough, MA. It was a wonderful day to support ITAM and their incredible service to veterans. They have been so generous and supportive of our Chapter as well,

and we were delighted to support their tournament once again.

As we move forward together, it is my hope as your Chapter President that we can remain steadfast in our commitment to our mission and those who we are honored to serve. We will always continue to be united in support of our members by honoring their sacrifice and ensuring that they receive the care, respect, and gratitude they are due.

Thank you for your support and partnership.

With gratitude,

Brad Carlson  
Chapter President and National Director

by Brad Carlson  
NEPVA President



Brad with golf partner Jim Clark just after Jim's burdie.



Mark Murphy, Bobby, Brad, Holly Warshaw, Jim Clark, at the Italian American War Veterans (ITAM) Post 45 Annual Golf Tournament at Juniper Hills in Northborough, MA.



Brad with Senator King of Maine.



Government Relations Report

Kristen McCone Gordon  
Director of Government and Community Affairs

Dear NEPVA Members,

I'm pleased to report that our Chapter had another successful advocacy trip to Washington, D.C. I want to give a very special thank you to Brad and Kathy Carlson, Gary Jezierski, Denise Pease, and Mark Murphy for traveling with me to D.C. and advocating so effectively for our members! Our conversations in-person on Capitol Hill are so helpful in our larger government relations efforts. Our government relations program is growing by the day, and we are always looking for more members to join the team!

As mentioned previously, the two leading issues we raised with members of Congress were: [The Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act](#) and [The Justice for ALS Act](#). While we support all PVA's legislative priorities, and will advocate for them throughout the year, these two bills were selected because they significantly impact our members in New England.

The Autonomy for Disabled Veterans Act would increase the Home Improvements and Structural Alternations (HISA) grant program to a more reasonable amount for disabled veterans. These rates haven't increased since 2010,

but the costs of home modifications and construction have risen more than 50%. As we relayed to our congressional delegation, this causes a significant financial hardship for paralyzed veterans. Our Chapter is committed to advocating that paralyzed veterans deserve adequate funding so that they can continue to live independently in their homes.

We also asked the New England congressional delegation to support the Justice for ALS Act, which provides much needed and earned support to the families of our members with ALS. This bill would honor our members with ALS by providing their surviving spouses with Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, a benefit that veterans with ALS have earned for their families.

Both pieces of legislation provide much needed benefits and relief to veterans and their families. Our conversations were well received on Capitol Hill, but the work of our advocacy



Congressman McGovern (MA) and Kristen



Gary and Kristen with Congresswoman Trahan (MA)

Our Chapter is committed to advocating that paralyzed veterans deserve adequate funding so that they can continue to live independently in their homes.

on these issues is just beginning. Please help us garner support from Congress on these, and all PVA priorities, by sending a message to your member of Congress through the [PVA Action Force](#) today.

If you would like to share your thoughts on these pieces of legislation, or have been personally impacted by these issues, please reach out to me ([kristen@newenglandpva.org](mailto:kristen@newenglandpva.org)).

With Gratitude for your service,

Kristen McCone Gordon  
Director of Government and Community Affairs

2024 POLICY PRIORITIES



Protect Access to VA's Specialized Health Care Services

VA's health care system must receive sufficient funding in order to continue providing the specialty care needed by veterans with SCI/D. Without adequate funding, VA will not be able to properly care for veterans, hire and retain health care professionals and support workers, and maintain and expand VA's medical infrastructure. PVA advocates for proper funding for VA's SCI/D system of care through the [Independent Budget](#)—a partnership with DAV, PVA, and VFW. Critical reforms are also needed so VA can adequately meet veterans' health care needs.



Staffing

VA must effectively use the pay and workforce provisions approved in Public Law 117-103 (RAISE Act provisions) and the PACT Act (Public Law 117-168) to recruit and retain necessary health care professionals, particularly those needed for VA's SCI/D system of care. VA must also increase retention incentives and reform its hiring processes, including working with Congress to make needed reforms. Congress must also take additional action to boost pay caps for other providers not included in the RAISE Act provisions and PACT Act.



Infrastructure

VA's infrastructure processes need to be reformed and staffing increased to allow the department to effectively use needed funding. VA also must develop a nationwide infrastructure plan to better address the SCI/D system's unique care delivery model.

2024 PVA Priorities

Protect Access to VA's Specialized Health Care Services

Expand Access to VA Long-Term Services and Supports and their Survivors

Improve VA Benefits and Health Care Services for Paralyzed Veterans and their Survivors

Protect the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities

Improve Access to Social Security Benefits

Increase Employment Prospects for Veterans with Disabilities



# NEW ENGLAND PVA CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC

## The Event

Serving paralyzed and disabled Veterans for over 75 years, the New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America is pleased to offer the 4th Annual Golf Classic. We invite all companies, individuals and friends of New England PVA to participate in this grand charity tournament.

## Tournament

11:00 a.m. Golfers welcome to pick up box lunch, test their luck at the putting contest or purchase raffle and Mulligan entries

Noon. Shotgun Start, rain or shine. Play will be a scramble format.

4:00 p.m. Putting contest finals

4:30 p.m. "Golf in Italy" buffet served by Raffael's Hingham.

## Registration

Golf \$600 – Foursome or \$150 Single  
Includes all meals and a swag bag

## Who Benefits

We hope to fill the playing field with 120 golfers supporting the free programs and services provided by New England PVA to paralyzed veterans throughout New England.

## NON-Profit

New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America is a Registered 501(c)3 Non-Profit. EIN: 04-6112881

## Questions

Contact Holly Warshaw

Phone 508-846-0538

Email [holly@pvanewengland.org](mailto:holly@pvanewengland.org)

MONDAY  
AUGUST 19, 2024  
NOON  
SHOTGUN

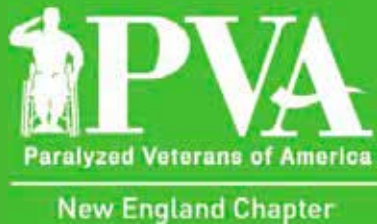


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# Sports & Recreation

## ADAPTIVE WATER SKIING with Northeast Passage

Come experience the freedom of carving across the wakes and catching some big air on NEP's adaptive water skis. Northeast Passage offers adaptive sit down skiing, stand up skiing, and tubing.

### Water Skiing Essential Eligibility Criteria

To participate in these events, all participants must meet the following criteria:

- Be able to breathe independently, not require medical devices to sustain breathing.
- Be able to maintain a closed mouth/lips while under water.
- Independently hold head upright without neck/head support.
- Be able to independently turn from face down to face up and remain floating face up while wearing a properly fitted personal flotation device.
- Get out of a capsized waterski independently, when floating in deep water.
- Participants must successfully demonstrate the above criteria through a water test prior to their first ski of the sea son, if they have modified their ski fitting or are trying a new piece of equipment and/or if they have experienced a change in medical status since their previous water test.
- Be able to manage personal care independently, or with the assistance of a companion who accompanies you.

Due to limited capacity and high demand for water skiing opportunities, we are asking participants to register for 2 sessions and wait list for additional dates.

Choose 1 session time: 4:00-6:00PM OR 6:00-8:00PM. Fee: \$40/session

Merrimac, MA: July 16, July 23, August 13, August 20

Barrington, NH: July 2, July 9, July 30, August 6, August 27

## ROWING

This program, operated by Holyoke Rows, is free to individuals with people with disabilities and their families. While receiving instruction and the opportunity to practice, rowers also have the chance to participate in competitions! Our program serves people of all capabilities, from beginners to leisure rowers, to competitive racers!

Connecticut River at 25 Jones Ferry Rd., Holyoke, MA

Thursdays, by appointment only

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| • June 27  | • August 15  |
| • July 11  | • August 22  |
| • July 18  | Cost: Free   |
| • July 25  | To Register: Call Holyoke Rows at  |
| • August 1 | (413) 320-3134 or  |
| • August 8 | Email <a href="mailto:office@holyokerows.org">office@holyokerows.org</a> |



Scan the QR code  
to see all the  
summer activities  
offered by Mass  
Department of  
Recreation

## KAYAKING & CANOEING

Walden Pond State Reservation, 915  
Walden St, Concord, MA

Thursdays, 1-3 p.m.

- July 11
- July 18
- July 25
- August 29

Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m.

- August 6
- August 13
- August 20
- August 27

Kayaking at Hopkinton State Park,  
164 Cedar St., Hopkinton

Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m. -3 pm

- July 9
- July 16
- July 23
- July 30
- August 6
- August 13
- August 20
- August 27

Canoeing and Kayaking at DAR State  
Forest, 78 Cape St, Goshen

Wednesdays, 9:45 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

- July 10
- July 17
- July 24
- July 31
- August 7
- August 14
- August 21
- August 28

Service Officers Report

Important Tax Exemption for Connecticut Veterans

by Zachary T. Nuetzel  
National Service Officer

Hello NEPVA. I hope everyone is enjoying the warm weather that summer has brought. This month I wanted to inform our veterans of the recent passing of Public Act 24-46 as this may act may benefit many of our NEPVA veterans who live in Connecticut. Public Act 24-46 is An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Veterans Who Have a Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating. In the following article I will provide information regarding the tax exemption as well as the qualifications.

Last month, Governor Ned Lamont of Connecticut signed into law new legislation that exempts property taxes of the primary residence or vehicle of veterans who are rated permanently and totally disabled. The exemption currently is meant for the primary home owned by the veteran. However, if the veteran does not own a home it can be applied to their vehicle.

In order to qualify for the exemption, you must be a veteran and have proof of veteran status. The other qualification is that you must have a service connected permanent and total disability rating. It is important to note however, that this is a state benefit and not a Department of Veterans Affairs benefit. Therefore, the property tax exemption is applied for through the town assessor. For veterans that are interested and require proof of their disability rating, you can obtain an award letter that shows your benefits and service verification through the VA. There are a few ways to obtain the letter. You are able to propagate a letter through your profile on VA.gov. Another way to obtain the letter is through your local National Service Officer.

The law is set to go into effect on October 1st, 2024. We are currently

*We are currently attempting to contact veterans in Connecticut who may be eligible for the exemption in order to inform them of the passing of the law.*

attempting to contact veterans in Connecticut who may be eligible for the exemption in order to inform them of the passing of the law. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more regarding the property tax exemption, or are unsure if you meet the qualifications, please feel free to contact your National Service Officer for information on eligibility.

Sincerely,  
Zachary T. Nuetzel  
National Service Officer  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
201 Varick Street  
Room 4W59.50  
New York, NY 10014

ZacharyN@pva.org  
(202) 416-1075  
fax- 212-807-4047

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We work with the VA, TRICARE and CHAMPVA to serve veterans and their families.

Contact us today!  
[www.maximhealthcare.com](http://www.maximhealthcare.com)



2024 POLICY PRIORITIES



Expand Access to VA Long-Term Services and Supports

VA's services span the spectrum from facility-based care to home and community-based services. Increased availability of long-term services and supports is crucial to the ongoing health of paralyzed veterans, as well as ensuring all veterans are able to receive the care they need throughout their lives in the setting of their choice.



Facility-Based Long-Term Care

VA must adequately assess the number of veterans with SCI/D who need facility-based specialty long-term care and implement policies that will increase beds and prioritize related infrastructure projects.



Home and Community-Based Services and Caregiver Supports

Congress and VA must increase access to home and community based-services, including expanding programs like Veteran-Directed Care and modernizing VA's Bowel and Bladder program for family caregivers. Congress and VA must also prioritize efforts to increase the direct care workforce that provides the services and supports veterans with SCI/D require to live in their communities. In addition, veterans must be authorized to receive a sufficient number of hours of support each week to ensure their daily needs are met.

VA must reform the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Restrictive eligibility criteria have kept some paralyzed veterans from being found eligible for this program. For those veterans who are not eligible for the PCAFC, VA should provide them with more information about other programs available to help them, including the general caregiver program. VA must also ensure that veterans found eligible for the program are assigned the appropriate tier for their caregiving needs.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA – REGIONAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICERS

BOSTON VA REGIONAL OFFICE

Joseph E. Badzmierowski  
Director of Field Services  
J.F.K. Federal Building - Room - 1575 C  
BOSTON, MA 02203  
phone: (617) 303-1395  
fax: (617) 303-1396

TOGAS, VARO, I VA CENTER

Michael Snape, National Service Officer III  
Bldg. 248, Room 112  
Augusta, ME 04330  
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fax: (207) 621-4829  
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MANHATTAN

Zachary T. Nuetzel, National Service Officer  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
201 Varick St., Room 4W59.50  
New York, NY 10014  
phone: (202) 416-1075  
zacharyn@pva.org  
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West Roxbury phone: (857) 203-6091  
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Amauris Polanco, National Service Officer III  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
James J. Peters VAMC  
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Bronx, NY 10468  
phone: (718) 584-9000 ext. 6272

SYRACUSE VAMC

Charlie Tocci, East-North Area Manager  
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# 2024 POLICY PRIORITIES



## Improve VA Benefits and Health Care Services for Paralyzed Veterans and their Survivors



### Veterans and Survivor Benefits

Congress must increase VA Special Monthly Compensation/Aid and Attendance benefits for catastrophically disabled veterans to offset increased costs for home care and other needed supports.

Congress must continue to improve access to services and benefits for veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma.

Congress must pass legislation ending forfeiture of military retirement pay to receive VA disability compensation.

Congress must increase the rate of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for surviving dependents and lower the eligibility threshold. Congress must also ensure survivors of ALS veterans have access to enhanced DIC benefits.



### Transportation Programs and Supports

Congress must authorize veterans who have nonservice-connected catastrophic disabilities to receive adaptive equipment from VA to drive their vehicles. VA and Congress must also provide improved transportation services and supports that help veterans access needed health care, including increasing the beneficiary travel reimbursement rate and reforming the reimbursement process.



### Life Insurance Benefits

Congress must reform VALife to allow premium waivers for catastrophically disabled veterans and ensure ALS veterans' survivors receive these critical benefits.



### Home Modification Grants

Congress must raise the rate of funding available through VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations grant program to allow eligible veterans to access needed housing modifications due to their disabilities.



### Health Care and Benefits for Women Veterans

VA must consider the unique needs of women veterans with SCI/D when delivering and developing services and benefits, including those that are gender specific.



### Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Congress must repeal VA's ban on IVF and authorize VA to provide assisted reproductive technology, including IVF, surrogacy, and gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care.

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**NEPVA**

**Chapter Golf Tournament**

**August 19**

**South Shore Country Club**

**Hingham, MA**

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out more about the  
NEPVA Charity Golf  
Tournament



## Indego® Gets Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again

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Email: support.indego@parker.com





Paralyzed Veterans of America  
New England Chapter  
1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301  
West Roxbury, MA 02132

tel: 617 942-8678  
800 660-1181  
fax: 857 203-9685

Email: [info@pvanewengland.org](mailto:info@pvanewengland.org)

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:30pm



## New England Chapter

### **Major Steven Roy Andrew's Fishing Outreach**

**September 17,  
Lake Congamond, Southwick, MA**

**Visit Us at  
[pvanewengland.org](http://pvanewengland.org)  
for all the latest event info**

**Join Us**  
**at Our Upcoming Events**  
additional dates to be announced soon.

**VA Summer Sports Clinic,  
July 22-26, Rhode Island**

**National Veterans Wheelchair Games,  
July 25-30, New Orleans**

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