



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Nevada Chapter

2nd Quarter 2023
Volume 1 Issue 2

Elections

It's once again time to start thinking about elections. We are approaching the time for electing a new President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and five (5) members of the Board of Directors for our chapter.

Please get involved and run for office. If you would like to run, please submit your biography to our office, along with a letter of intent advising us of which position you are interested in running for. We will be publishing biographies of all members interested in running for office in our 4th quarter newsletter. Bio's will be due **no later than** August 15, 2023. Ballots will be sent out in December and due back to our office **no later than** January 15th, 2024.



Paralyzed Veterans of America, Nevada Chapter

www.nevadapva.org

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Mission Statement

The mission of Nevada PVA is to improve the quality of life of U.S. military veterans and others who have spinal cord dysfunction through the use of adaptive sports, recreation, wellness programs, outreach, education, research and support.

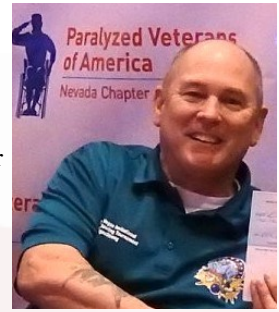
Disclaimer

The Nevada Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America is a non-profit organization. We do not ask for or receive any money from any federal or state agencies. All of our funds are received mainly from donations. All members of the Paralyzed Veterans of America have sustained a spinal cord injury or disease. This newsletter is a publication of the Nevada chapter and is meant to inform its readers of Chapter activities, legislation, and other matters of concern to veterans and/or members of the disabled community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Nevada PVA, its officers, board members, the editor or production staff.

President's Report

by Bill Burns

I want to congratulate our executive director, Julie Johnson; she was awarded Elk of the Year by Elks Lodge #1468. This award recognizes all her hard work to improve the quality of life for veterans and children with special needs in Nevada.



Executive Director's Report

by Julie Johnson

SPRINGTIME! We love this time of year, the weather is perfect and not blazing Vegas hot, lmao.

Our board president Bill Burns, and staff have been planning a group outing for our Southern Nevada members. We usually go to a dinner and show every couple of years, but this is the first one since 2019. We are going to the Mirage to have a Japanese dinner and to see Beetles Love. Stay tuned for future group outings.

Northern Nevada members don't be sad because in September we will be co-hosting a three-day retreat with our friends at the Bay Area & Western PVA chapter. The events have not been scheduled yet but so far, the plan is an Aces baseball game, some fun lighthearted quad rugby, SCI lunch, boccia ball and working on some other stuff, perhaps either the air show or rent a movie theater for just our group to watch a movie. Save the Dates September 15-18th.

We are super thrilled to have a team of mainly novices join us for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in July. We are also working with the City of Las Vegas and Henderson to help them grow programs and start new ones, for example handcycling, football, boccia ball, basketball, and rugby. If you're interested let us know and we will get you in touch with the right people.

Save the Date September 30th for our General Membership and Awards Banquet.

A huge thank you to National PVA for your support of our annual trapshoot. Our shooters had a great time and in perfect weather at the beautiful Clark County Shooting Park.

Our Annual Walk, Run and Roll was a success. Thank you to our sponsors **Tropicana Hotel, SIOR, Burk Injury Lawyers and Navy Federal Credit Union**. Because of you, our adaptive sports program is allowing many veterans to improve their health and wellness.



Service Officer's Report

by Jason McDonald, NSO

Implementation of New Laws

As some of you may have heard Congress recently passed some laws that PVA has advocated for. This includes House Resolution 7939, The Veteran's Auto and Educational Improvement Act of 2022. Specifically, the law allows the VA to provide an additional automobile allowance to eligible veterans if 30 years have passed since the date they received their first grant. Starting 10 years after the law was signed, the timeframe will decrease and eligible veterans will be able to receive an additional grant if 10 years have passed since their first grant. The law also changes the definition of "medical services" to include certain vehicle modifications (e.g., van lifts) offered through VA's Automobile Adaptive Equipment (AAE) program. This latter provision helps ensure the VA's current support through the AAE program to veterans with non-service-connected illnesses and injuries remains available. Finally, a newly added provision allows VA to provide non-articulating trailers designed to transport powered wheelchairs, powered scooters, or other similar mobility devices as adaptive equipment.

Now that the law has passed there is a sequence of events that happens and this might now be the exact order but it gives you an idea. The process now is that VA must develop procedures as to how to implement the law and the costs associated with it. The procedures will be reviewed by different departments within the VA to determine if the procedures are in accordance with what the law states. Then VA Finance will have to develop the cost of the laws impact on the VA budget. VA General Counsel and VA Office of Finance will review the procedures and meet with the VA Secretary. Afterwards it is sent to the Congressional Committees and The Office of Management and Budget. When all of the intricacies have been worked out, the Secretary signs off and tells the VA to implement the law.

This entire process can take weeks or months and in some cases a year or more. I hope this has been informative and helps explain why implementation takes time and why veterans have to wait to apply for the benefits.

Sports Report

by Jason Kelley

We held our annual trapshoot at the Clark County Shooting Park. We had a small but mighty group this year.

Robert Butterfield – Overall Wheelchair Shooter

Fred Shultz – Top Shooter

Bill Pearce – 1st Place

Melvin Tabion – 1st Place Novice

Tom Richey – 1st Place Virtual

2023 US Wheelchair Rugby Western Conference Regionals
Las Vegas, Nevada March 31 to April 2, 2023

From March 31 to April 2, 2023, the Las Vegas High Rollers Wheelchair Rugby team hosted the US Wheelchair Rugby Association Western Conference Semifinals at the UNLV Paul McDermott Physical Education Building. Seven teams from around the United States traveled to Las Vegas to join the High Rollers in competing for five spots at the USWRA DI, DII, and DIII National Championships in Rockford, IL, from April 28 to April 30.

Sports Report

Continued

The Arizona Ability 360 Heat went 6-0 to win the Western Conference Regionals and earn a spot at Nationals. The High Rollers battled all weekend and finished a respectable 3-3, thus punching their ticket to Rockford. Let us wish the High Rollers the best of luck as they work to bring a National Championship back to Las Vegas. Go High Rollers!



Legislative News

Washington Update

HELPING HEROES ACT REINTRODUCED

Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and John Boozman (R-AR), senior members of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, reintroduced the Helping Heroes Act of 2023, S. 622. This legislation would support the families of disabled veterans, including children who take on caregiving roles. The Helping Heroes Act is intended to address the unmet needs of veteran caregivers, including children by:

- Requiring a full-time family coordinator at each VA medical center to assess the needs of veteran families in their catchment area and refer them to available local, state, and federal resources;
- Establishing a Family Support Program to provide supportive services to eligible family members of disabled veterans;
- Ensuring transition assistance curriculum includes information on services for children in veteran families adjusting from active duty to veteran status; and
- Requiring VA to collect data on the experiences of disabled veteran families to better identify and understand their needs.

2023 POLICY PRIORITIES

For more than 75 years, PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA—the nation's premier nonprofit of choice for disabled veterans, their families, and caregivers—has led the fight for accessibility and provided a full circle of support from the point of injury or diagnosis to all of life's milestones. With offices inside every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) spinal cord injury and disorder (SCI/D) center across the U.S., PVA is unmatched. Staffed with licensed architects, medical professionals, legal experts, and leaders in research and education, PVA fights to help veterans with SCI/D or diseases, like MS and ALS, receive the benefits they earned, the specialized health care they deserve, the accessible homes and vehicles they need, and the meaningful careers they want.

For these veterans to thrive, they must have access to high-quality, comprehensive health care and timely delivery of all earned benefits. They must also have equitable access to the same opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans.

Protect Access to VA's Specialized Health Care Services

To ensure access to VA's health care system, it must receive sufficient funding. Without it, VA will be unable to provide veterans proper care, hire and retain health care professionals and support workers, and maintain and expand VA medical infrastructure.

PVA advocates for proper funding for the SCI/D system of care through the Independent Budget—a partnership with DAV, PVA, and VFW. In addition to adequate funding, other reforms are needed to ensure VA can 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. 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.

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 this range of resources is crucial to the long-term 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 reforms needed to prioritize these types of infrastructure projects.

Home and Community-Based Services and Caregiver Supports

VA must increase access to home and community based-services. VA needs to expedite expansion of the Veteran-Directed Care program. This program provides veterans with the ability to direct their own care and hire individuals, including family members, who will help them with their everyday needs. Veterans must also be able to continue receiving VA funds that allow them to pay their caregivers, even when hospitalized. Congress and VA must also prioritize efforts to increase the direct care workforce and allow VA to provide veterans with financial support for assisted living options.

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.

The Administration and Congress must improve supports for caregivers as outlined in the 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, which was developed by the RAISE Family Caregiving Act and Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act advisory committees and focuses on needs of all caregivers.

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.

Life Insurance Benefits

Congress must reform VAMLife 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, gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care.

Protect the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities

Protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities is important to ensuring their ability to access the opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans to allow them to live, work, travel, and fully participate in society.

Improve Access to Air Travel

Congress must make systemic changes in the next FAA Reauthorization to improve air travel for people with disabilities, particularly wheelchairs users, by reforming the Air Carrier Access Act to add standards for aircraft accessibility and improve enforcement of the law. Congress must also improve paralyzed veterans' access to programs that facilitate the security screening process.

Increase Disability Access

Congress must enhance tax incentives to help businesses comply with their obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Also, the Department of Justice must investigate more individual ADA complaints and issue long-overdue regulations related to hotel bed height and accessible medical equipment standards. Industries creating new models and forms of transportation, including electric and autonomous vehicles, must ensure disability access as a matter of equity.

Improve Access to Social Security Benefits

Congress must end the five-month wait for Social Security disability insurance benefits to ensure people with disabilities have financial support when they most need it. Veterans must receive more information about Social Security benefits and assistance in applying for them. Also, Congress must ensure that caregivers who are not in the workforce because they are providing caregiving assistance are able to receive credit under Social Security.

Increase Employment Prospects for Veterans with Disabilities

Congress must increase access to employment opportunities for veterans with significant disabilities through tax incentives for employers and improvements to supports provided to veterans through the state workforce system. VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment program must ensure veterans with catastrophic disabilities are able to fully access the services that allow them to return to work.

For Those Who Care for our Veterans

As the caregiver for a Veteran, you have our grateful support. Every day, you are "down in the trenches," caring for our wounded men and women and providing them with physical and emotional support. Your sacrifice is perhaps the least-understood aspect of a service member's injury. The reality is, you work behind the scenes every day of the year to help our veterans cope with the challenges of life. Which is why we have support and service options designed with you in mind. These programs are available both in and out of your home. They help lift the burden of caretaking and help you understand that you are not alone.

Caregiver Resources

- VA Caregiver Support Line: **1-855-260-3274**
- Go to pva.org for more caregiver resources

Too many of us are not living our dreams

Scholarships

Nevada PVA offers three (2) annual full-time scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. It is open to any student attending a college or university as long as they are a member or a family member of a Nevada PVA member. Deadline for application submission is June 30, 2023 and awards will be made in August in time for the fall semester. The money will be sent directly to the college or university. Please contact the office if you would like a scholarship application package sent to you.

Upcoming Events

PVA Public Awareness Month—**April 1-30**

Paralympic Kids BBQ—**April 26**, JD Smith Middle School

Corrections Academy Graduation—**May 11** Orleans Hotel & Casino

Paralympic Kids Family Night—**May 11**, Gold Coast Bowling Alley

PVA Outing—**June 6**, Mirage Hotel

National Veterans Wheelchair Games—**July 4-9** Portland, OR

Annual Reno Event—**September 16-18**

Annual General Membership Meeting & Awards Banquet—**September 30**, Aliante Hotel



We were honored to sponsor lunch at the Northern Nevada State Veterans Home in honor of Vietnam Remembrance Day





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

April

Timothy Andring
Lawrence Brown
Edwin Collins
Johnnie Crowe
Michael Crowe
Roger Dauffenbach

Kristjan Dushmani
Larry Feezor
William Geller
Barbara Johnson
Robert Jones
Twillia Loewen

Jesse Martin
Jeanette Miller
Jason Mullholland
Gary Price
Randal Slutz
Brad Whiting
Helen Wicker

May

Mark Allison
Francisco Alvarado
Taylor Bocclair
Robert Gainer
Roy Hogsett

Brian Johnson
LuAnn Leavitt
Sheree McLean
Delbert Mitchell
Lee O'Brien

Michael Supulver
Michael Taday
William Taylor
Joseph Thorn
Paul Troche

June

William Burlew
Eric Collins
Reynaldo Diaz
Andrew Evans
Tonya Fabian
Austin Fabian

Kimberly Johnson
Leah Kelley
Tina Lemus
Wayne Litzinger
Roger Long
Ken Martin

Chuck McDivett
Anthony Picirilli
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Thank you to everyone who participated in our Trapshoot. Congratulations to all our winners, we look forward to seeing you next year.



Thank you to our Adopt-A-Vet volunteers & Elks Lodge #1463
We could not do this without you.



A BIG THANK YOU to NV Energy for their grant to help
with our Adopt-A-Vet Program.



Thank you to the Sponsors of our
11th Annual 5K event



SOUTHERN NEVADA
CHAPTER



Thank You!

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Donations can be made in any amount. They will accumulate from January 1—December 31. Donors will be printed in our monthly newsletter unless otherwise requested. To make a donation go online to www.nevadapva.org or call 702-646-0040.

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Las Vegas VA Medical Center Locations

Mailing Address: VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, 6900 North Pecos Road, North Las Vegas, NV 89086

Main Number: 702-791-9000 **Toll-Free Phone:** 1-888-633-7554 **VA Pharmacy:** 702-791-9076

Toll-Free Nurse Advice Line: 1-877-252-4866

	Northeast Primary Care Clinic 4461 East Charleston Boulevard Las Vegas, NV 89104	702-791-9050
	Northwest Primary Care Clinic 3968 North Rancho Drive North Las Vegas, NV 89130	702-791-9020
	Pahrump Community Based Outpatient Clinic 2100 East Calvada Boulevard Pahrump, NV 89048	775-727-7535
	Southeast Primary Care Clinic 1020 South Boulder Highway Henderson, NV 89015	702-791-9030
	Southwest Primary Care Clinic 7235 South Buffalo Drive Las Vegas, NV 89113	702-791-9040
	Community Resource and Referral Center 926 West Owens Avenue Las Vegas, NV 89106	702-791-9077
	Mike O'Callaghan Federal Medical Center 4700 North Las Vegas Boulevard Las Vegas, NV 89115	702-653-2227 EMERGENCY CARE ONLY
	Psychosocial Rehab Recovery Center 3525 W. Cheyenne Avenue North Las Vegas, NV 89032	702-791-9060
	Vet Center - Las Vegas 1919 South Jones Boulevard, Suite A Las Vegas, NV 89146	702-251-7873
	Vet Center - Henderson 400 North Stephanie Street, Suite 180 Henderson, NV 89014	702-791-9100
	Women's Health Center Temporarily at Northeast PCC 4461 East Charleston Boulevard Las Vegas, NV 89104	702-791-9050

Veterans Transportation Service (VTS)

Veterans can schedule transportation through their VA primary Care Provider or by calling the VTS office at 1/844-859-5074. Please schedule transportation ahead of

NATIONAL CRISIS HOTLINE

Dial 988 Press 1

or

Text 838255

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