

The Wheeled Herald



Published by the Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter

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Great Plains PVA Supports Nebraska MS Walk



On April 25th, Great Plains PVA members, staff, auxiliary, friends, and family gathered at the Riverfront in downtown Omaha to join hundreds of people in the walk to find a cure for people living with MS.

About a third of our chapter members are veterans living with MS, and we are proud to join this effort to help improve their lives through funding for research and a collective effort to bring greater awareness to the disease and its impact on people's lives. Thank you to PVA Team Captain Shayna Goerdts for the team Tshirts!



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President's Message by Randy Squier



PVA held its 80th anniversary convention in Las Vegas Nevada, May 11 through the 15th. The Great Plains chapter was represented by Shayna Goerd, filling in for Dave Nelson, as he recovers at home from knee surgery. We applaud her enthusiasm and willingness to experience the executive branch of PVA in action. With PVA's national directors, its executive committee and department heads in the same room, it is a back-and-forth exchange of ideas and strategies that guide us into the future.

PVA's awareness month brought us together on April 21st to host a mini billiards tournament at the chapter. A light dinner was prepared and enjoyed even as my pool skills were lacking. All in all a good evening with friends.

Chapter Officers

Randy Squier, President
John Scott, Vice President
Will Leavitt, Secretary
Seth Kotouc, Treasurer

Chapter Directors

Dave Nelson, Director
Tom Timmerman, Director
Shayna Goerd, Director

Immediate Past President

Mark Linquist

National Director

Dave Nelson

National Service Officer

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Patrick Reynolds
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MS/Women Veterans Lead

Shayna Goerd
shayna@greatplainspva.org

A few of us joined Nebraska's MS walk on April 25th at Omaha's downtown Riverwalk. Another great outing with our MS friends and members and those that support the cause.

Our chapter also hosted a caregiver's night April 28th where we recognized many of those who help get us through the day. These caregivers are worth their weight in gold as they support and stand firmly beside us.

It won't be long before our biggest fundraiser of the year is here. Our golf tournament on June 7 is a great representation of a supporting community. It's a great time for our chapter as many friendly faces join in making that Sunday, a success. Enjoy your summer. Join us at the chapter if you have time.

VA Nurse of the Quarter

Congratulations to Keri Hunke, RN Vascular Surgery Case Manager, for being selected as our latest Nurse of the Quarter for her exceptional, compassionate care of veterans. Board members Will Leavitt and John Scott presented her with the award.



NSO Report

by Destiny Payne, PVA National Service Officer

Getting Emergency Care at Non-VA Facilities

If you think your life or health is in danger, call **911** or go to the nearest emergency department. You don't need to check with VA first. VA defines an emergency department as a facility that has the staff and equipment to provide emergency care (like a hospital or free-standing emergency department). Urgent care facilities typically aren't covered unless they are in VA's Community Care network.

VA must get the notification within **72 hours** of when your emergency care starts. The provider, you, or someone else acting on your behalf can notify VA.

Notify VA right away in either of these ways:

- [Through our VA emergency care reporting portal](#), (hyperlink) or
- By calling VA at **844-724-7842**

By law, VA can only cover the cost of your care at a non-VA emergency department if you meet all of these requirements:

- You're enrolled in VA health care or you have a qualifying exemption from enrollment, and
- A VA health care facility or other federal facility that could provide the needed care wasn't "feasibly available" (meaning it was too far away for you to get there fast enough to get the emergency care you needed), and
- A person with an average knowledge of health and medicine (called a "prudent layperson") would reasonably believe that a delay in seeking care would have put your life or health in danger, and
- You meet our other requirements based on your specific situation—including the time limit for us to receive your claim.

If you get a bill for emergency care at a non-VA facility and you think VA should cover the cost, call **877-881-7618**.

Each veteran's health care situation is unique, and VA benefits can be complex. That's why it's important for every veteran to understand which benefits apply to them.

Information for this article was gathered from public sources such as Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations and <https://www.va.gov/resources/getting-emergency-care-at-non-va-facilities/>. (hyperlink)

CHAPTER BIRTHDAYS

May

Brian Steere * Lanna Vestal * Seth Kotouc * Douglas Norwood * Troy Peterson *
Shiloh Jamerino * Alton Woolley

June

Joshua Ourada * Jessica Nutz * John Weinburgh * Gary Miles * Dennis Wagner * George Lower *
Richard Nobles * Daniel Griffin * William Stice * James Beversdorf * Versie Anding *
William Churchman * John McPhatter

July

Christina Caines * Paul VanCleave * Robert Eckerson * David Nelson * Richard Avena *
Richard Conley * Thomas Timmerman * Garold Chalupa * John Owens * Clara Locher *
Richard "Dick" Mondragon * Frank Kampovitz

Executive Directors Report

by Mary Bushman

Dear Members,

Paralyzed Veterans of America held its 80th Annual Convention May 12-15th in Las Vegas, Nevada. National Directors from 30 of the 33 PVA chapters attended to conduct the business of the organization. Great Plains PVA member Shayna Goerdts attended as our Chapter's temporary Director in place of the chapter's regular National Director David Nelson who was absent for medical reasons. Great Plains Chapter President Randy Squier and Executive Director Mary Bushman attended the convention by zoom.

Here are a few highlights from the convention:

During his welcome remarks, PVA National President Robert Thomas commented that Paralyzed Veterans of America has come a long way since 1946 in advocating for its members, but PVA must continue on because more efforts are needed.

PVA National Treasurer Tom Wheaton informed the Directors that for the first 9 months of this fiscal year, PVA is strong financially. Net assets and reserve balances both increased over 2025. Wheaton says this upward trend is due to high donor loyalty and strong fiscal discipline by the organization. He continued that PVA must remain diligent and be good stewards of its funding while developing strategic plans for fundraising realities.

PVA's Marketing and Communications Department (MarComms) gave a detailed update to the National Directors about their efforts to raise PVA's public profile. This included an upcoming series of podcasts and the development of a clearer more effective website to strengthen the PVA brand. National PVA plans to debut its "One of One" Campaign in September 2026. The new campaign will feature 53 weekly stories highlighting the fact that PVA is the only organization in America specifically serving veterans with spinal cord injuries and diseases like MS and ALS. PVA's Chief Operating Officer Shaun Castle said he had encouraged the MarComms Department to "Think Different" when developing PVA's new branding strategy with the goal of lifting the entire organization up.

During the convention, I had the opportunity to attend a breakout meeting of the Association of Chapter Executive Directors (ACED). The mission of the ACED is to promote communication among Chapter EDs to share ideas and strengthen the administration and operation of PVA Chapters across the country.

National PVA's fiscal year begins July 1st and ends June 30th. After discussion, the National Directors passed a budget for fiscal year July 2026 – June 2027. Following the budget presentation, Directors listened to reports from staff on PVA's efforts to support SCI Research and Education and heard updates from each of PVA's Program Managers.

The convention concluded with the election of PVA's Executive Committee. The 2025 Vice Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary all renewed their positions, and Robert Thomas was re-elected as PVA National President. In his concluding remarks, Thomas expressed his gratitude to the caregivers and friends of PVA that made it possible for the National Directors to attend the convention.



CMSC 2026: Where Research Meets Real Life

by Shayna Goerd, MS POC

Last month, I had the opportunity to attend the 2026 Consortium of Multiple Sclerosis Centers (CMSC) Annual Meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina.

For anyone living with MS, CMSC represents something important: a place where researchers, healthcare providers, advocates, industry partners, and people affected by MS come together with a shared goal of improving lives.

Throughout the conference, attendees explored the latest research, emerging therapies, symptom management strategies, rehabilitation approaches, and innovations in patient care. While the science is impressive, what stood out most was the continued focus on the person behind the diagnosis.

As someone who has lived with MS for many years, I know firsthand that managing this disease involves far more than MRI results and treatment plans. Quality of life, independence, mobility, mental health, and access to care all play critical roles in helping people thrive.



That is what makes CMSC unique. The conversations extend beyond the laboratory and clinic. Researchers hear directly from patients. Healthcare providers learn from advocates. Organizations build partnerships that help turn new discoveries into real-world support for people living with MS.

This year marked CMSC's 40th anniversary, providing an opportunity to reflect on how far the MS community has come. When I was diagnosed, treatment options were far more limited than they are today. Seeing the pace of innovation and the commitment of so many professionals dedicated to improving outcomes for people living with MS was both encouraging and inspiring.

The work is not finished. Challenges remain, and many people continue to struggle with access, symptoms, and uncertainty. But events like CMSC serve as a reminder that progress is happening every day.

I left Charlotte with renewed optimism—not only because of the research being presented, but because of the people behind it. Together, researchers, clinicians, advocates, organizations, and individuals living with MS are helping build a future with more options, better care, and greater hope.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter and USA Boccia

Present: **Boccia 101 Clinic**

Boccia is the sport for ALL! Boccia is played recreationally and all the way to the Paralympics. Limited equipment is needed and it can be played indoors. Boccia is a sport of precision, strategy, and skill captivating audiences with its unique blend of competitiveness and camaraderie. The sport is designed for people with a wide range of physical disabilities



This clinic is **FREE** and appropriate for new, seated players and coaches, as well as Boccia athletes ready to improve their game. Please register early!

<https://forms.gle/bv2b4dkiQejQttHj6>

**Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter
Gymnasium
7612 Maple St.
Omaha, NE 68134**



**Friday June 12
3:00-6:00 pm**





Attention Omaha & Council Bluffs

USA Boccia National Championships Need You!

Omaha Sports Commission is hosting the
2026 USA Boccia National Championships
July 29th - August 2nd, 2026

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED
NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED!

Groups & Individuals are encouraged to sign up.
Sign up for one or multiple shifts.

Great Volunteer Opportunities:

- High School Groups: Community Service Hours
- College Sports Teams
- Corporations: Give Back to a Well-Deserved Group
- Park & Recreation Staff
- Senior Citizen Groups

Venue: Iowa West Field House, 5 Arena Way, Council Bluffs, IA 51501

Volunteers needed for Court Lining & Registration Table on **Wed, July 29th** starting @ 9:00am

Thursday July 30th - Sunday Aug 2nd : 8:00am to 6:00pm, Various shifts available


- Timers, Linesman, and off court volunteer opportunities (training provided)
- Photographers, Video, PA Announcers, Local Info Booth, Hospitality
- Medical Support: Nurses, MD, PA, etc.

Organizational Description

USA Boccia is the National Governing Organization for the promotion & development of Boccia. Our athletes play the Paralympic sport from a wheelchair and have a wide range of physical abilities. Our athletes range from Youth to Military Veterans.

Sign up online to volunteer at: <https://signup.com/go/usanPsm>

Visit Omaha Sports Commission for more information: <https://www.omahasports.org/boccia>



Nebraska Disability Pride Celebration

Celebrating 36 years of the ADA

Saturday, July 25th 2026

Vendor Fair 9 AM-11 AM

Party in the Auld 11 AM-1 PM

**Antelope Park
Auld Pavilion
1650 Memorial Dr
Lincoln, NE**



Look for updates on the celebration on our facebook page at
facebook.com/NebraskaDisabilityPride



by Patrick Reynolds, Sports Director

2026 March Challenge

This was the first challenge workout with our new pulldown machine from Rogue Fitness. This thing is much less forgiving than our old Magnum pulldown machine, and I love that. Travis Hasenkamp pulled out the victory here, besting Chris Parnell by 29 seconds. The first five all had about 30 seconds between places...thought that was interesting. Below is the format and results of our March Challenge:

- Format
 - For Time:
 - 50 pulldowns
 - 300' sled drag/push
 - 35 pulldowns
 - 16 cub hops/step-overs
 - 20 pulldowns
- Results
 - 1. Travis Hasenkamp – 7:02
 - 2. Chris Parnell – 7:31
 - 3. Barry Ridout – 8:06
 - 4. Ethan Eckelbarger – 8:22
 - 5. Matt Ross – 8:51
 - 6. Daniel Schmitt – 8:56
 - 7. Tim Hobbs – 9:38
 - 8. Bruce Froendt – 10:00

2026 PVAFit Individual Competition and the 2026 WheelWod Semi Finals

It's time again for our yearly in-house individual competition! This year we will hold nine scored events over six weeks to find the fittest athlete here in our gym. All event formats and results will be posted on our Facebook page if you wish to follow along. Also, the videos will be uploaded to our YouTube page (Great Plains PVA Adaptive Fitness).

Daniel will be competing in the 2026 WheelWod semi-finals concurrently with our competition. He will complete four scored events May 14-18 for a spot at the Games in San Jose. If curious, you can view the leaderboard on competitioncorner.net. Just search 2026 WheelWod Semi Finals and navigate the drop down menu to find the Major Neuro Male division. We will also upload all of his video to our YouTube page if you'd like to watch.

Mini Chapter 9Ball Tournament



2026 **POLICY PRIORITIES**



#PushingAccessForward

2026 POLICY PRIORITIES



For 80 years, PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA—the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely to the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or diseases (SCI/D), like MS and ALS—has led the fight for accessibility and provided a full circle of support from the point of injury or diagnosis through all of life’s milestones. With offices inside all 25 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) SCI/D centers, 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 receive the benefits they earned, the specialized health care they deserve, the accessible homes and vehicles they need, and the meaningful careers they want. PVA also advocates for disabled veterans with the greatest support needs to have access to the same opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans.

To review PVA’s policy priorities in depth, please visit PVA.org/PolicyPriorities.

Strengthen the Foundations of VA’s Specialized Health Care Services

- **Veterans with SCI/D choose VA for their care because it is unmatched in the community.** Sending catastrophically disabled veterans to the community for specialty care services, rather than providing it in the VA, decreases the quality of their care.
- **VA’s SCI/D system of care is a national system of care.** Veterans from different states often depend throughout their lives on the services of their SCI/D center (hub) site. Sites at VA facilities closer to home (spokes) give veterans options while ensuring access to the full support of this crucial care system.
- **Chronic staffing deficiencies continue to have a direct, adverse impact on VA specialty care.** The SCI/D system of care faces clinical vacancies and suffers from inefficient hiring practices.
- **Infrastructure deficiencies also compromise veterans’ care.** VA’s SCI/D system of care is comprised of 25 acute care centers and seven long-term care centers. Many of the older centers have only had cosmetic or basic renovations.

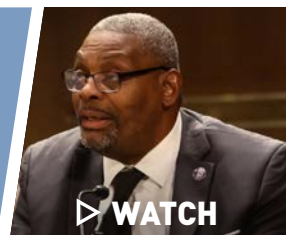
▶ Recommendations

- Implement a holistic assessment of the SCI/D system of care and ensure individual centers are properly supported to meet SCI/D veterans’ needs.
- Address chronic staffing deficiencies in VA specialized services, including the SCI/D system of care.
- Prioritize facility infrastructure and leasing projects that support the unique services the VA provides, such as SCI/D care, that are not readily available in the community.
- Provide sufficient funding to fully support VA specialized services, like SCI/D care, through proper staffing and infrastructure.



PVA firmly believes VA is the best health care provider for disabled veterans, particularly those with catastrophic disabilities. More importantly, our members consistently choose VA.”

Testimony of PVA National President Robert Thomas on September 17, 2025, before the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee.



2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

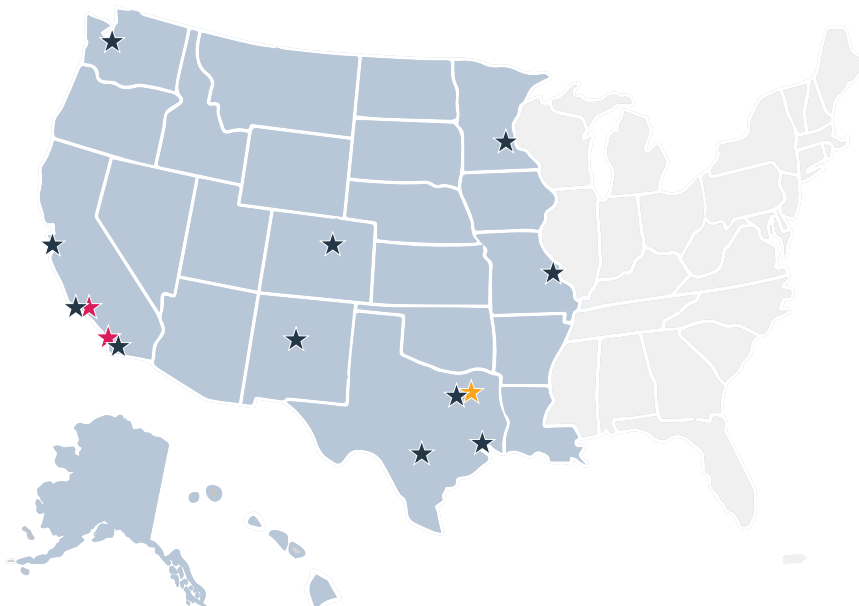


Maximize VA Long-Term Services and Supports for Veterans with SCI/D

- **Veterans with SCI/D often need long-term services and supports**, whether in their homes or through facility-based care, throughout their lives.
- **Inadequate nursing care for SCI/D veterans in community institutions often leads to a lower quality of care, poorer outcomes, and increased costs for VA.** Many community facilities will not accept veterans with intensive needs, such as those who are ventilator dependent or require regular assistance with bowel and bladder functions.
- **Disabled veterans with the greatest support needs must also have improved access to VA-provided home and community based-services**, such as those available through the Veteran Directed Care (VDC) program.
- **The VA's Bowel and Bladder program is a life-sustaining program providing support to veterans with SCI/D, but it is fraught with challenges for caregivers and is unevenly applied across the VA.** Timely reimbursement and the tax treatment of payments are the chief complaints, as well as a lack of due process in its administration.
- **VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) unnecessarily restricts even some paralyzed veterans from being found eligible for this program.** These caregivers, as well as unpaid caregivers, are unable to receive Social Security credits for retirement.

▶ Recommendations

- Prioritize infrastructure and leasing projects focused on increasing specialized VA long-term care facilities for veterans with SCI/D.
- Monitor the implementation of the provisions in the Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act of 2025 (P.L. 118-210) that expand access to VA's home and community-based services to ensure that services, including the VDC program, are available to all catastrophically disabled veterans, regardless of where they live.
- Codify VA's Bowel and Bladder program to correct existing reimbursement problems and ensure equitable treatment of payments for veterans' caregivers.
- Reform VA's PCAFC to reduce unnecessary restrictions on access to family caregiver supports for veterans with catastrophic disabilities.
- Support credits under Social Security to ensure that caregivers are not penalized in retirement for taking time out of the workforce to perform caregiving duties.



- ★ SCI/D Acute Care Centers
- ★ SCI/D Long-term Care Facilities
- ★ SCI/D Long-term Care Facilities in Development

2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

Fortify the Financial Security of Veterans with SCI/D, their Families, and Survivors

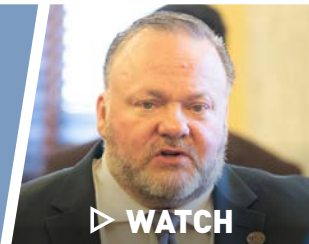
VA Disability Compensation

- **VA Disability Compensation is a crucial, earned benefit for veterans who are injured or become ill** due to their service.
- **Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) is an additional benefit that can be paid to veterans due to special circumstances**, such as the need for aid and attendance by another person, or a specific disability, such as loss of use of one hand or leg.
- **SMC is designed to compensate for non-economic factors**, including the severe nature of the disability, social inadaptability, or inconvenience. It is not meant to compensate for the economic effects of a service-connected disability.
- **Baseline rates for SMC have not been re-examined for years** and are not meeting the cost of living with a catastrophic disability.



Special Monthly Compensation is intended to assist veterans with the higher costs of living that disabled veterans experience. But its baseline rates haven't been raised for decades, so it isn't helping veterans as much as it did when it was established."

Testimony of PVA National Treasurer Tom Wheaton on December 3, 2025, before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.



▶ Recommendations

- Ensure that the core foundations of the VA Disability Compensation program are preserved, and that Congress and the VA take meaningful actions to eliminate inefficiencies affecting veterans, their families, and survivors.
- Support increasing SMC rates for veterans with catastrophic injuries and illnesses.

Employment

- **Veterans with catastrophic disabilities face significant challenges in finding and obtaining employment** that meets their needs.
- **High caseloads within the VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program limit the amount of time counselors can spend with individual veteran clients**, particularly those with significant barriers to employment.
- **Disabled veterans using the VR&E program do not receive the same subsistence rate as Post-9/11 GI Bill recipients.**

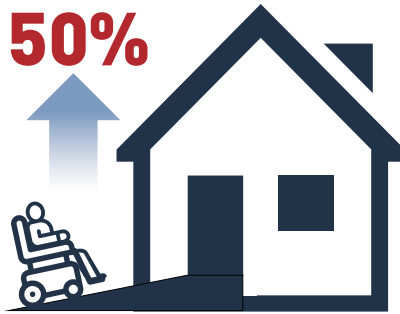
▶ Recommendations

- Oppose efforts to weaken disability-related protections for and incentives to hire disabled veterans.
- Prioritize filling VR&E staffing vacancies to ensure veterans with catastrophic injuries and illnesses receive the time and attention needed to address their complex disabilities and help them return to work.
- Reform VR&E to remove inefficient processes and ensure that benefits targeted to disabled veterans are not less than those available in VA's education programs.

2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

Accessible Housing

- **Affordable, accessible housing is in short supply, for people with disability** including disabled veterans.
- **VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations (HISA) grants help veterans and service members make medically necessary improvements and structural alterations** to their primary residence.
- **The HISA grant ceiling has not been raised in over a decade**, yet the cost of home modifications has significantly increased over the same period.



Increase in materials and labor costs for home modifications since 2010.

VA Survivor Benefits

- **VA provides Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to qualified survivors of service members and veterans.**
- **DIC rates have only been minimally adjusted since 1993.** These payments are approximately 41 percent of compensation for a 100 percent service-disabled veteran with a spouse. In contrast, monthly benefits for the survivors of federal civil service retirees are calculated as a percentage of the civil service retiree's Federal Employees Retirement System or Civil Service Retirement System benefits, up to 55 percent.
- **Rarely do survivors of veterans with ALS qualify for the additional "DIC kicker,"** available to survivors based on how long the veteran lives with a totally disabling disability, due to the quick progression of the disease.

▶ Recommendations

- Enhance the availability of accessible housing by increasing tax incentives for home modifications and building accessible units.
- Support increasing HISA grant amounts to match the present cost of typical housing renovations and tie them to a construction cost index for future years to ensure the benefit serves its intended purpose.

▶ Recommendations

- Support indexing the rate of compensation for DIC payments to 55 percent of a 100 percent service-disabled veteran with a spouse to achieve parity with federal employees' survivors.
- Support providing eligible survivors of veterans who died of service-connected ALS with the DIC kicker.

DIC kicker eligibility requirement

8 years

Average life expectancy of person with ALS

3-5 YEARS

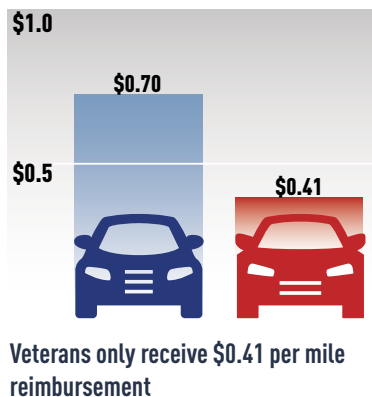
2026 POLICY PRIORITIES



Increase SCI/D Veterans' Access to Health Care Services

Accessible Transportation

- **Transportation is often one of the biggest barriers to health care for veterans with SCI/D.** Missed health care appointments result in worse health outcomes and higher costs.
- **VA's Automobile Adaptive Equipment (AAE) program provides necessary vehicle adaptations,** but changes have made it more bureaucratic.
- **VA's travel mileage reimbursement rate has remained stagnant,** even while gas prices and other costs like insurance and maintenance have increased.



Recommendations

- Improve travel options for catastrophically disabled veterans, particularly those who use wheelchairs, live outside urban areas, and need help traveling to medical care appointments.
- Streamline the AAE program by eliminating hurdles that make it more difficult for veterans to purchase and access vehicles that meet their needs.
- Increase the reimbursement rate for veterans' travel expenses to improve their access to health care services and reduce their financial burden.

Growing Disabled Veterans' Families

- **Thousands of service members have suffered injuries, illnesses, or encountered exposures that affect a veteran's ability to procreate.**
- **Women veterans are 50 percent more likely to suffer from infertility** than the general population.

Recommendations

- Protect and support increased access to health care services, including IVF, that help disabled veterans grow their families.
- Direct research to improve VA's ability to meet the long-term reproductive health care needs of veterans whose SCI/D affects their ability to reproduce.

Women Veterans with SCI/D

- **More women veterans than ever are using VA health care.** Women veterans with SCI/D are a small but significant subset of these users.
- **Women veterans, including those with SCI/D, need access to comprehensive gender-specific mental and physical health care** with high standards of care regarding the quality, privacy, safety, and dignity of that care.

Recommendations

- Improve access to services and benefits for veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma.
- Designate women veterans' primary care services and gender-sensitive mental health care as essential, foundational services at every facility and provide training to community care providers.
- Ensure that all VA and community care clinicians who provide services for women veterans adhere to VA's evidence-based clinical practice guidelines.

2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

Ensure Equal Opportunity and Full Participation for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans

Disability Access

- **Despite the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), access barriers remain, unfairly limiting opportunities for veterans with disabilities,** including those who use wheelchairs.
- **Unfortunately, complaints filed with the Department of Justice are routinely dismissed without any action due to the number received.** Despite a private right of action, lawyers are often hard to secure as there are no monetary damages for suits against public accommodations under the ADA.

Surface Transportation

- **Despite the ADA and other disability rights laws,** access to transportation continues to be fragmented.
- **People with disabilities, particularly those who use wheelchairs and other assistive devices for mobility, routinely encounter disability-related barriers in accessing transportation.**
- **Problems range from broken sidewalks to a lack of accessible taxis and rideshare vehicles, as well as an inability to safely and efficiently access rail and subway stations** due to a lack of elevators or level boarding.

▶ Recommendations

- Support increasing tax incentives that help businesses with ADA compliance and increase funding for the DOJ review of ADA complaints.
- Oppose efforts to impose requirements that would decrease proactive compliance by giving businesses an opportunity to “cure” the violation prior to a lawsuit or hinder adoption of regulatory requirements that promote equal opportunity and full participation.

▶ Recommendations

- Include proposals in the next surface transportation reauthorization that will provide needed funding to help remove barriers to transportation for people with disabilities, including fixing barriers that prevent access to sidewalks, curb cuts, and crosswalks.
- Support efforts that increase accessible transportation options for wheelchair users, such as wheelchair accessible rideshare and autonomous vehicles.



**Top access barrier for PVA members?
Broken or missing sidewalks, curb cuts,
and crosswalks.**

2026 POLICY PRIORITIES

Ensure Equal Opportunity and Full Participation for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans, continued

Air Travel

- **Veterans with SCI/D must endure inaccessible security screening processes and are often injured in the aircraft boarding and deplaning process** and/or their assistive devices are delayed, damaged, or even destroyed.
- **The FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 (P.L. 118-63) recognized the need to improve the safety and dignity of passengers with disabilities** through new training requirements, an improved complaint process, and research focused on improving air travel for wheelchair users.
- **In 2024, the Department of Transportation finalized Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulations protecting the safety and dignity of passengers with disabilities who use wheelchairs and scooters in air travel.** Now, some of those protections are in danger of being rolled back.
- **ACAA protections are only enforceable through discretionary administrative actions.**

▶ Recommendations

- Improve airport security screening processes and training to facilitate an efficient and dignified experience.
- Conduct effective oversight of implementation of FAA Reauthorization Act requirements focused on improving disability access in air travel.
- Oppose efforts to rollback regulatory requirements for wheelchair users in air travel.
- Support improved enforcement of ACAA requirements to protect the health and safety of passengers with disabilities.



#PushingAccessForward

@Paralyzed Veterans

@Paralyzed Veterans of America

@PVA1946

@PVA1946

PVA.org • 1875 Eye Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20006



**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

2026



FEBRUARY

19th: Membership Meeting & Lunch
11:00am at the chapter

28th: Ladies Night
4:00 - 7:00 PM



MARCH

3rd: Power Soccer Session Begins
Tuesdays, 6-8pm



APRIL *PVA Awareness Month*

21st: Billiards Mini Tournament
4-8pm at the chapter

25th: MS Walk: Nebraska

28th: Caregiver Night
6-8pm at the chapter

Power Soccer Tuesdays 6-8pm

MAY

2nd: Wine & Roses Fundraiser

5th: Power Soccer Session Ends

11-15th: PVA Convention, Las Vegas

JUNE



7th: Golf Tournament

9-11th: PVA Advocacy Seminar,
Washington DC

25-28th: PVA Bowling Nationals
Mockingbird Lanes, Omaha

SEP-DEC



Billiards Tournament

Trunk or Treat

Veterans Day Poster + Poem Contest

Cornhole Clinic/Tournament

Christmas Party

For more information, contact us at vazquez@greatplainspva.org
or visit our website www.greatplainspva.org.



SAVE THE DATE!



PVA Bowling Series Nationals

Hosted by Great Plains PVA

June 25-28, 2026

Mockingbird Lanes in Omaha, NE



- Singles * Doubles**
- 3-Person Team**
- Up/Down Tournament**
- Goody Bags**
- Lunches * Photos**
- Raffles * 50/50s**
- Silent Auction**

\$30,000 Prize Fund!

**FEATURING:
More Free Bowling Ball Drawings!
On-Site Pro-Shop Special Offers**



Questions: Contact Dave Nelson at 402-208-4841 or dnelson68135@yahoo.com



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Great Plains Chapter



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@greatplainspva



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Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter (Great Plains PVA) is a non-profit organization that has dedicated 55 years to helping veterans with spinal cord injuries, as well as other individuals living with disabilities across Nebraska, Western-Iowa, and Kansas. Great Plains PVA is dedicated to improving quality of life by providing education, promoting equal opportunities, encouraging independence, and enhancing lifetime health and fitness. PVA is at the forefront helping and advocating for the rights and benefits of veterans and all people living with disabilities.