



Gateway **azette**

Vol.46
No.1

January/February 2022



VETERANS WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY OR DISEASE, LIVING LIFE TO THE FULLEST

www.gatewaypva.org
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**NEED TO UPDATE
YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION?**

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**DO YOU WANT TO RECEIVE
YOUR NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL?**

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Contact us at one of the following:

Gateway Chapter PVA
1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132

314.427.0393 or 800.426.4058
Fax 314.427.4183

info@gatewaypva.org

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#1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
St. Louis, MO 63125
Office: (314) 894-6467 or (866) 328-2670
Fax: (314) 894-6465
Rodney Harris, Senior Benefits Advocate

PVA National Liaison VP

Josue Cordova



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Stanley D. Brown

To a Good 2022

Here is wishing you and your family a joyous holiday season and a healthy new year. About this time each year I complain about the cold, but that doesn't seem to be a problem yet. It was 70° yesterday in St. Louis and I'm not expecting sticker shock on my upcoming gas bill. Speaking with my good friend from high school, 55 years ago, we both concluded our conversations have progressed to a third and perhaps final topic. Our first phase was youthful and conversations focused on the opposite sex and sports. The second phase was middle-age where we were consumed with our careers and perhaps retirement. And now we've noticed without any alerts on our calendars, that we're in the third phase. We talk about colonoscopies, cataract surgeries, and a plethora of problems associated with our aging bodies, especially in my case with 26 years now post injury. To summarize I suppose, my wish for all of us, especially those in our august years, is for good health in 2022. We hope to go to bed at night with someone telling us our backside looks okay; we hope to get through the winter avoiding bronchitis or pneumonia. In my case, I would like to go a few weeks without visiting my local emergency room and getting hospitalized. The last two months I've been three times. Once each for low-sodium, a UTI, and most recently again for being dehydrated. No easy task for quads to balance these pitfalls. When I went in with low-sodium I had drunk too much water and flushed sodium out of my system. For the many members

who suffer with kidney stones, I am sympathetic but cannot have empathy because I've been spared that banking problem. So to everyone in your family here's hoping for a healthy new year with minimum pain, hospital visits and no dreadful autonomic dysreflexia with a UTI where we sweat in our beds while at the same time are freezing.

When are "Things" Back to Normal?

The simple answer is I wish I knew. Returning 7B at John Cochran to be for acute SCI patients has happened at least twice only to be reversed and used for other needs. PVA service officer Rodney Harris and I continue to meet with VA management to try to keep the beds open and the assigned SCI nurses remaining on the unit. Both John Cochran and Jefferson Barracks are both currently "closed" with exceptions only for appointments which include annual physicals. I know Recreation Therapy was planning to open by appointment, parts of the new gymnasium adjacent to Building 52. One day was going to be for bowling at the new four-lane project that is now complete in the basement of the new gym, another day was going to Boccia ball practices in the new gym area on the ground floor.

Appointments are going to be needed for participants at either event and your name would be given as an "appointment" to come in the entrance gate. I'm still waiting to hear from Recreation Therapy when this might start. We are also still not doing a

monthly luncheon with outpatients coming to the SCI unit; we do however continue to purchase and have delivered lunches for staff and inpatients twice a month. Lastly, our office is technically open; we would only ask you wear a mask when coming inside.

New provider for the Veterans Directed Care Program

For those of us that are on the veterans directed care program, and you should be if you're eligible, we will be having ARIS Solutions as the new contract service provider. They will be the third provider we have had since the program started. Their phone number is 866-970-3301 and they are out of Vermont. If you are already in the program with Delta Center, you and your workers should have received enrollment packets explaining the program and the new pay schedule which begins the last two weeks of December. I called in with one question regarding the lack of information on direct deposit for your worker. I was told that if your worker had direct deposit through Delta Center, it would also apply to ARIS Solutions. Contact your assigned caseworker from Aging Ahead. If you're reading this section wondering what's going on, contact your social worker to see if you qualify for the Veterans Directed Care Program. Not all areas do. With the program you may choose your attendants, sign off on their hours, and the VA then pays your worker directly by check or direct deposit, as well as keeps track of taxes and withholdings.

FROM THE DESK OF
GATEWAY CHAPTER'S

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Blanchard

CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE

We are working to create more of a social media presence for the Gateway Chapter. This will not only create another way for us to reach Gateway members, but also potential donors. We unfortunately had to create a whole new Facebook page, due to not having access to our old one that was created prior to Amber's or my employment. That one still exists but we are working on trying to get it removed.

With all this being said, we encourage you to like/follow our new Facebook page and also share the page so that we can reach more people and possible donors. You can use the web address below to access the correct Facebook page.

[https://www.facebook.com/
PVAGatewayChapter](https://www.facebook.com/PVAGatewayChapter)

NEW SERVICE OFFICER

We welcome John Moyle as the National Service Officer Candidate at the St. Louis office on Page Ave. Please read his introduction on the next page of the newsletter. Once fully trained, he will serve as a backup to Senior Benefits Advocate, Rodney Harris.

TRIVIA NIGHT FUNDRAISER

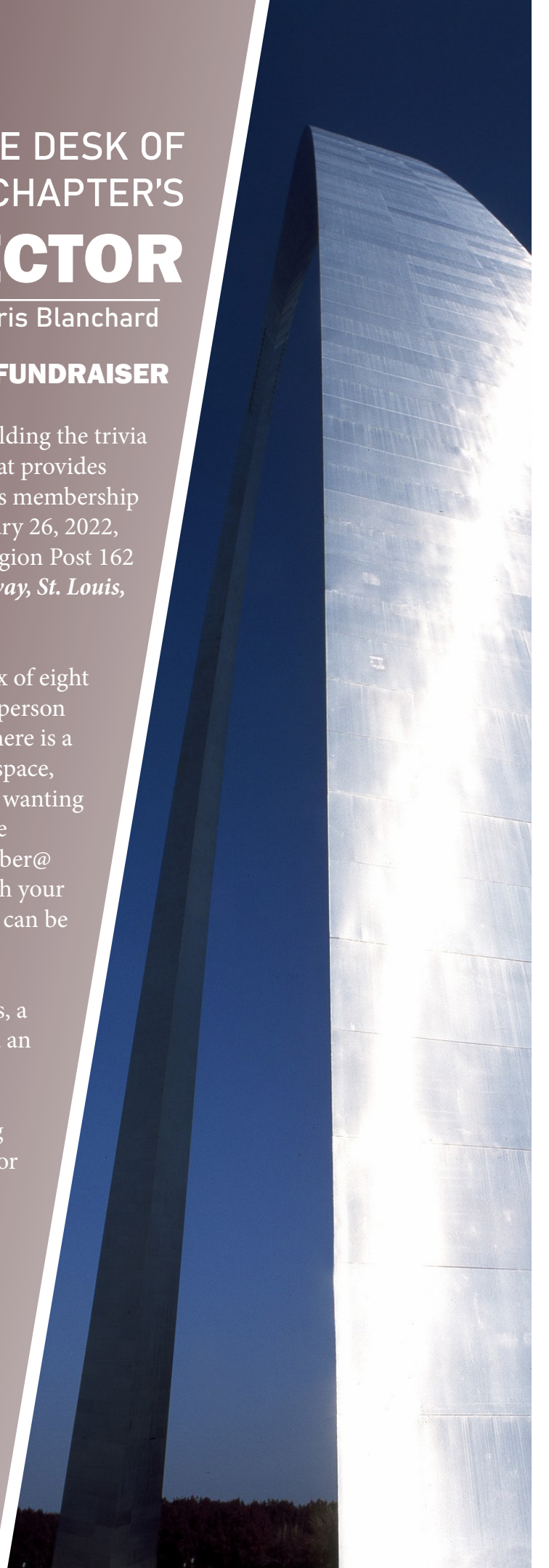
This year we are holding the trivia night fundraiser that provides funds for our sports membership program on February 26, 2022, at the American Legion Post 162 (9305 South Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63125).

Tables will be a max of eight people at \$25 each person (\$200 per table). There is a limited amount of space, therefore if you are wanting to participate please email Amber at amber@gatewaypva.org with your interest so that you can be registered.

There will be games, a 50/50 drawing, and an auction table.

We are also looking for donated items for the auction table. Please contact us at the office if you have any questions.

The flyer for trivia night can be seen on page 7 of this newsletter.



INTRODUCTION

by John Moyle, National Service Officer Candidate

John Moyle has accepted the position of National Service Officer with Paralyzed Veterans of America in St. Louis. He's a U.S. Navy veteran who comes to PVA from a 20-year career as a technician and field manager in the communications industry.

He was born and raised in New Jersey and has been a St. Louis resident since 1998. John has been happily married for 23 years and is a father of two, with a son in middle school and a daughter attending Fontbonne University. In his off-time John focuses on his family and volunteers at local events when he can.



SPORTS REPORT

by Lou Monken, Sports Director

2021 NVWG Medal Winners

New York City, NY August 8-13, 2021

CHARLEY WRIGHT, COACH

LAROY SMITH= 5 Gold, 2 Bronze

STANLEY BROWN= 3 Gold, 1 Silver

LARRY PORTER= 6 Gold

Virtual Wheelchair Games

St. Louis, MO August 5-18, 2021

CHARLEY WRIGHT, COACH

MATT LUITJOHAN, COACH

CHRIS BLANCHARD, COACH

JIM LUCAS= 2 Gold

ROSE GANZ= 5 Gold

TERRI FUDA= 2 Gold

DON FELDOTT= 1 Gold, 1 Bronze

LOU MONKEN= 2 Gold

On December 5th, 2021 the American Legion presented Gateway Chapter PVA two checks. The first check was in the amount of \$10,000 from the American Legion Post 162 and the second check was in the amount of \$3,500 from the American Legion Post 162-Sons of the American Legion. The American Legion has supported Gateway for many years. At the presentation we had some members from the Gateway Chapter and their family- Bob Weigand, Ruth and Tim Kult, Scott Richards, Ann Malburn, Lou Monken, and Charley Wright with his brother Mike.

We proudly support Gateway PVA



If you have a **service-connected disability**, you may qualify for VA funding assistance for wheelchair accessible vehicles or driving modifications. If your current mobility is more than two years old, you may even qualify for a brand new conversion.

St. Louis North

9389 Natural Bridge Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63134
Local: (314) 989-1010
Toll-Free: 877.501.8267

St. Louis South

980 S. Highway Drive
Fenton, MO 63026
Local: (314) 292-5150
Toll-Free: 877.501.8267



We're here to help!

Call us today or stop by and take a test drive.



Proud Supporters of the



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**



- **50/50**
- **GAMES**
- **AUCTION**
- **CASH BAR**
- **FOOD**
- **DRINKS**

GATEWAY CHAPTER PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA'S

TRIVIA NIGHT

FEBRUARY 26, 2022

TRIVIA STARTS AT 6PM

DOORS OPEN AT 5PM

AMERICAN LEGION POST 162

9305 South Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63125

Funds raised helps support veterans attending the National Veterans Wheelchair Games and Winter Sports Clinic.

To make a reservation email: amber@gatewaypva.org

*Bring your snacks and table decorations
(personal alcohol beverages are not permitted)*

\$200
FOR A TEAM OF EIGHT



Gateway Chapter

If you are unable to attend but wish to make a monetary donation or wish to donate an item for auction - please make your check out to Gateway PVA and send your donation to Gateway Chapter PVA, 1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center, Saint Louis, Missouri 63132 or contact the office at 314.427.0393.



GATEWAY G.I.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Virgil Ealey
Terry Ismail
Dennis O'Sullivan
William Petty
James Winger II
Cynthea Wolf

MISSING IN ACTION

Have you seen or know the whereabouts of these members? They are in danger of being dropped from the PVA roster. Please contact the Gateway office with current contact information for the following members:

Steven Cathey
Nelson Donovan
Lynda Hauth
Jarid Hill
Kevin Jackson
Robert Melchior
Laurice Sappington
Donnell Thames
Willis Walker

IN MEMORY OF

Steven Gore of St. Charles, MO	08/18/2021
James Jordan of Alton, IL	09/28/2021
Harry Kutemeier of Eldorado, IL	10/07/2021
Terry Blankenship of Wickliffe, KY	10/16/2021
Dale Setzer of Grandview, MO	10/23/2021
Steven Hope of St. James, MO	11/03/2021

GENERAL INFORMATION



JANUARY

JANUARY 11 at 11:30am

Board of Directors meeting
Via Zoom (contact office for link) and
in person w/proof of COVID vaccination
and signed waiver
15 points for nonBOD members

JANUARY 17

OFFICE CLOSED



FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 8 at 11:30am

Board of Directors meeting
Via Zoom (contact office for link) and
in person w/proof of COVID vaccination
and signed waiver
15 points for nonBOD members

FEBRUARY 21

OFFICE CLOSED

FEBRUARY 26 at 6pm

Trivia Night Fundraiser
at American Legion Post 162
Contact amber@gatewaypva.org
20 points for Gateway members



Sales, Service, Rentals, Leasing, & Financing

PROUD SUPPORTER OF THE GATEWAY PVA



Braun Chevy Traverse



Braun Rear Entry Van

- New & pre-owned wheelchair accessible vans
 - Rear & side entry ramps
- BraunAbility, VMI, & ATC mobility conversions
- Wheelchair / scooter lifts
- BraunAbility Turny EVO seating
- Hand controls & more



VMI Toyota Sienna



ATC Truck

To better serve those who have served, we have locations in IL and MO. Contact us to ask a mobility specialist about VA funding options for qualified conversions and equipment.

12950 Koch Lane
Breese, IL 62230
☎ +618-526-4131

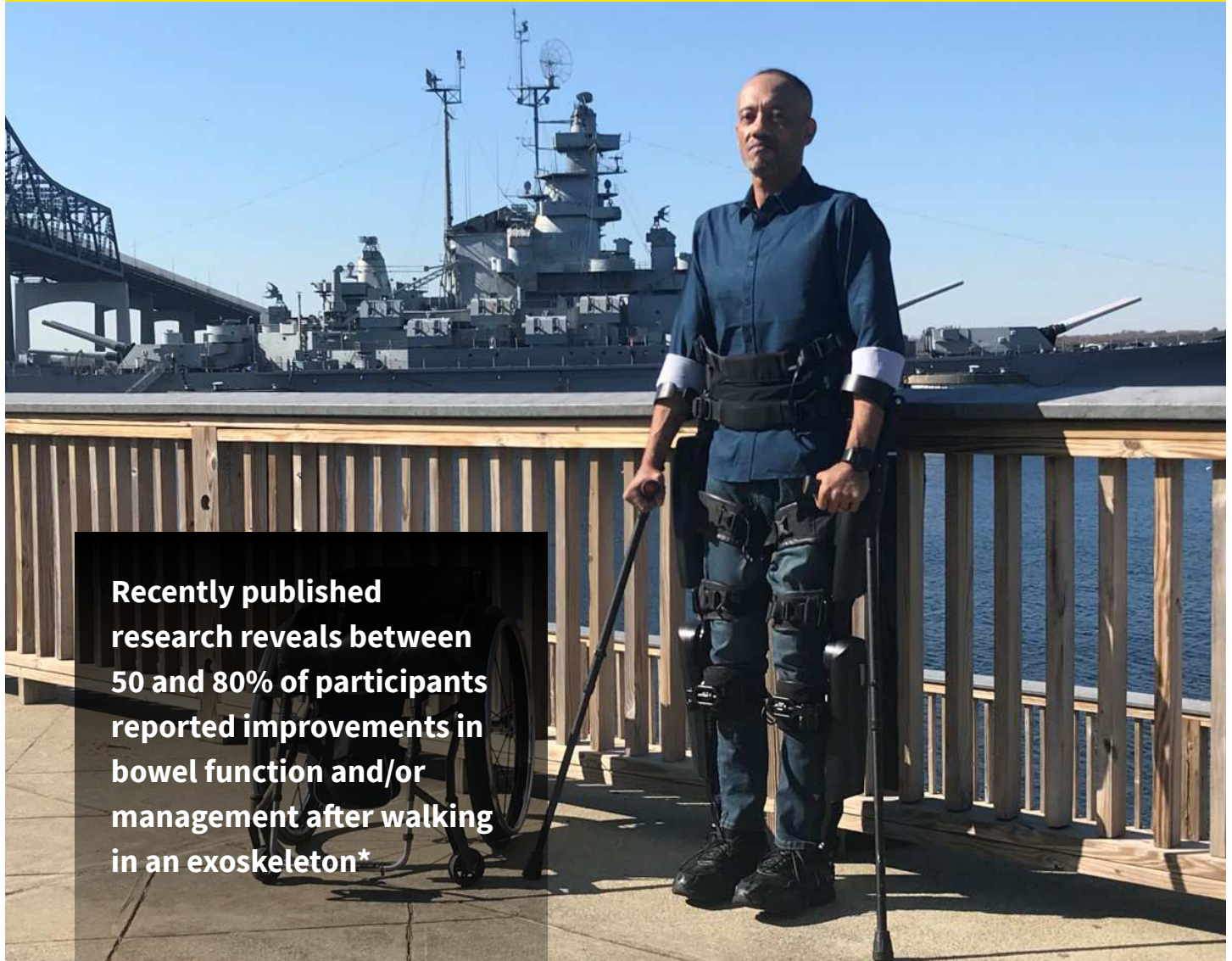
CONTACT US TODAY!



80 S Highway Drive
Valley Park, MO 63088
☎ +636-825-0700



Want To Improve Your Bowel Function?



Recently published research reveals between 50 and 80% of participants reported improvements in bowel function and/or management after walking in an exoskeleton*

Did you know Paralyzed US Veterans May be Eligible for a ReWalk Personal Exoskeleton?

Contact ReWalk for more Information:
rewalk.com/contact or
508.251.1154 option 2

*Chun A, et al. Changes in bowel function following exoskeletal-assisted walking in persons with spinal cord injury: an observational pilot study. Spinal Cord. 2020;58(4):459-466.



What is PVA Veterans Career Program? By Lauren Lobrano, Director, Veterans Career Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America's Veterans Career Program (formerly PAVE) was launched in 2007 to ensure that PVA members, their spouses, and caregivers, have access to meaningful employment, educational, and volunteer opportunities. Our team of certified vocational rehabilitation counselors and employment analysts provide high-touch, one-on-one assistance to guide Veterans through the process.

Studies have found that there are significant benefits for individuals who are engaged, including improved quality of life, enhanced self-confidence, expanded social network, a sense of community and increased income for those who are employed.

Veterans Career Program staff are specially trained to work with Veterans receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and other government benefits. We work hand in hand with PVA national service officers to take into consideration other benefits a Veteran may be receiving from the VA.

Despite the positive attributes of regular engagement, Veterans with significant service-connected disabilities are not currently seeking employment. More than 62% of Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 60% or higher either struggle with or opt out of joining the civilian workforce. When layered with the added challenges of managing a new injury or medical diagnosis, many may feel that the barriers to gainful employment are overwhelming.

Veterans Career Program Counselors and Employment Analysts continue to be leaders in dispelling the myths and challenging stereotypes of those with disabilities. Working with dedicated employment partners, we will continue

to create opportunities for quality and sustainable careers for those with significant and catastrophic injuries.

PVA Member Sean Ferry recently found success returning to work through the Veterans Career Program. In late 2018, Sean decided that he was ready to pursue employment opportunities again. He did not have a great deal of success working on his own and reached out to the Veterans Career Program in spring of 2019.

Sean worked one-on-one with Veterans Career Program Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Genia Hachenberg, M.S., CRC, to explore his areas of interest and review the necessary accommodations at work. In September, Sean returned to work for the first time since his injury and shared the following about his experience working with the Veterans Career Program:

“After my injury in 2014, my life was turned upside down. It was not easy to transition from being a Mechanical Engineer, and a rather avid hunter and fisherman, into a wheelchair dependent individual. After five years of unemployment, I turned to the Veterans Career Program and its employees for assistance in getting back into the workforce. They were a great asset to me and a resource that helped me get my job and gain back my independence and self-confidence. Thank you, Veterans Career Program!”

If you, your spouse, or caregiver, are interested in career support including paid employment, education, or volunteer opportunities please visit pva.org/Veteranscareerprogram or email Veteranscareerprogram@pva.org for more information.

Jacqueline Black, PT, ATP

It is hard to believe we are ready to welcome 2022. We all continue adapting to our “new normal”, and we are committed to continue expanding our excellent health care for veterans with SCI/D.

Today I would like to focus on our SCI/D Annual Evaluation. I hope all of you are familiar with this process, but some of you may be a bit delayed in your Annual due to Covid. I believe our SCI/D Annual Evaluation is one of the greatest specialty services we provide in VA SCI/D Care. There are now 3 ways you can complete your SCI/D Annual Evaluation: Outpatient (Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8am), Inpatient (pending bed availability), or VVC (VA Telehealth).

While we prefer to see you in person, we do now offer the virtual platform as an option. You will see all of the SCI/D

Interdisciplinary team members in each of these offerings, including:

Nursing, Nurse Practitioner, Physician, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Dietitian, Psychology, Social Work, and Pharmacy. Renal ultrasound will also be completed with in-person visits. Each discipline will perform a routine screening for

their specialty, and they further explore any “red flags” that may indicate need for further assessment and treatment. The appointments will take approximately 3-4 hours when you are in person. Remember- all of our team members work in SCI/D for the majority of their work day, so they are experts in SCI/D.

Some of you may say, “I’m doing really well- I think I can skip this year”. We encourage you to keep up with your Annual Evaluation- as this is your SCI/D Wellness Exam. We share your goal in staying well! On that note- I will share some of our Covid precautions. First, all of our SCI/D staff and inpatients are routinely screened with a Covid Antigen test, every 3 days. We require masks, we remain diligent with hand washing, and we limit visitors to necessary visitors (i.e. persons that are needed to help with care). As mentioned earlier, we do prefer to see you in person for your Annual, but we still provide the virtual option for those not comfortable with in-person appointments at this time.

From a therapy perspective, we complete our routine SCI/D PT and OT screenings and address any changes with your physical function over the past year. We also complete a thorough review of your adapted equipment and address any new needs that you may have. Assistive Technology also changes rapidly- so we may introduce you to some new technologies that may help you with your daily life.

We hope to see you at your next SCI/D Annual Evaluation! We also want to send best wishes for a great 2022. Stay healthy and safe- and remember- we are here to support you in both of those goals.

If you have questions, concerns, or kudos- please contact me at Jacqueline.black@va.gov or 314-652-4100, ext 64691.

JUSTICE FOR ALS VETERANS ACT OF 2021 INTRODUCED IN HOUSE

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, is a progressive nervous system disease that affects nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, causing loss of muscle control. In 2008, VA changed its benefits criteria to include ALS as a presumptive service-connected disease. Survivors of veterans with the disease are eligible to receive VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Under current law, a higher rate of compensation known as the “DIC kicker” can be paid to surviving spouses of veterans who had service-connected disabilities rated as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding their death. However, because the average life expectancy for a person with ALS is two to five years, most spouses of deceased veterans with ALS do not qualify for this additional benefit given the eight year requirement. To correct this, Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) recently introduced H.R. 5607, the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2021, which would extend increased DIC to the surviving spouse of a veteran who dies from ALS regardless of how long the veteran had such disease prior to death. H.R. 5607 was one of several bills examined during a recent House Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearing. In its statement for the record, PVA noted that VA already recognizes ALS as a presumptive service-connected disease, and due to its progressive nature, automatically rates any diagnosed veteran at 100 percent once service connected. We also pointed out that VA’s current policy fails to recognize the significant sacrifices these veterans and their families have made for this country. PVA strongly endorses this legislation and urges Congress to pass it as quickly as possible.

PVA WEIGHS IN ON PENDING VETERANS LEGISLATION

PVA submitted statements for a trio of hearings in October examining more than three dozen pending veterans bills. PVA endorsed several bills in its statement for an October 13 hearing conducted by the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee (HVAC), Subcommittee on Health. These included H.R. 2916, the VA Medical Cannabis Research Act of 2021, which would authorize VA clinical trials on the use of

medicinal cannabis, and H.R. 4794, the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options (MAMMO) for Veterans Act, which would improve access to breast imaging services for SCI/D veterans. The latter measure also requires VA to update its policies and directives to ensure that community care settings are accessible and have information on best practices for screening paralyzed and disabled veterans.

In our statement for an October 20 hearing conducted by the HVAC, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, PVA urged swift passage of H.R. 5607, the Justice for ALS Veterans Act, as well as H.R. 4772, the Mark O’Brien VA Clothing Allowance Improvement Act, which would eliminate the need for veterans with static conditions to reapply for their clothing allowance each year. PVA also submitted a statement for the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee’s hearing held that same day, weighing in favorably on bills like S. 2852, the LongTerm Care Veterans Choice Act, which would authorize VA to pay for the care of a veteran placed in a medical foster home and that chamber’s version of the MAMMO for Veterans Act, S.2533. Another measure discussed at that hearing, albeit a “longshot” due to its tremendous cost, would expand eligibility for VA dental care to all veterans receiving VA health care.

NEWS OF NOTE

VA Plans to Expand Access to HCBS

On July 27, PVA testified before the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Health regarding the difficulties veterans face obtaining VA Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). In our testimony, we noted that services like Veteran Directed Care are only available at some VA medical centers. We have recently learned that VA plans to announce an expansion of the Veteran Directed Care program to every VA medical center in the future. Beginning this fiscal year, VA will begin making these services available at additional VA medical centers and continue to increase the number of centers offering these services over the next five years until they are available at all of them. We will provide an update once more information becomes available.

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.

Free Indego Webinars

During the first Thursday of every month you can join a free live webinar to learn more about the Indego and hear from a veteran who owns a device already.



Contact us today to reserve your spot or find out if you are eligible to receive an Indego exoskeleton at no cost.

Email: support.indego@parker.com

Phone: 844-846-3346



Watch Marine Veteran Steve Holbert's story at www.indego.com/veterans





1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
 Saint Louis, MO 63132

Gateway Chapter

Current Resident or



Generosity can be found anywhere.
 Even the back of your closet.

Donating clothes and other household goods
 can help improve the lives of injured veterans.



**Paralyzed Veterans
 of America**

**WHEELS HELPING
 WARRIORS**

Your donated vehicle can go far in helping severely injured veterans. Donations are sold at auction with proceeds going toward programs and services for veterans and their families. You may also receive a tax break, too! Schedule your free, easy pickup today.



WheelsHelpingWarriors.org / 866-204-4548
Paid for by the Jeffrey Carlton Charitable Foundation



**Paralyzed Veterans
 of America**

Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere

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pva.org/givegoods today!**