

# Speedy Gazette

"Improving Lives... Building Futures"



## Paralyzed Veterans of America

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Mar - Apr 2021





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# Message from Frank Daebehelliehn, Chapter President

## ATTENTION LADIES OF TEXAS PVA

Our board of directors approved \$300 for “Spa Days” for you to pamper yourself. All TPVA lady members can use it as a full day of services like manicure, pedicure, facial, massage, haircut, etc. Or it can be used multiple times in smaller increments. Just submit your receipt to the chapter office for reimbursement. It must be used by the member and for services listed above. Submit via email to [amandas@texaspva.org](mailto:amandas@texaspva.org) or by mail: P.O. Box 989, Crosby, TX 77532

**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY!!**



Dear Member,

Paralyzed Veterans of America is now accepting applications for its scholarship program. Applications are being accepted through May 15, 2021.

Qualified members are:

- A PVA member, the spouse of a member, or an unmarried child (under 24 years of age) who is dependent (as defined by the IRS) on the member for principal support.
- A citizen of the United States.
- Accepted and enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited U.S. college or university.

Please Note: Previous award recipients may apply, but are limited to a total of two scholarships in a lifetime.

For addition information and to download the application, please visit <https://pva.org/find-support/scholarship-program/>

## Message from a Member

Getting a drone and getting my eyes back in the sky and around the neighborhood (up to three miles away) has really helped improve my days and quality of life.

One way to get out and around, especially get your eyes up in the sky for some freedom. Being homebound and losing my ability to fly in 1986 has been a problem. Flying a small drone really opens up my days and my moods!

Dennis Brooks USAF Rescue Retired

Below is the Zoom Meeting Capture YouTube Link...currently video quality is SD

[https://youtu.be/b1lClf\\_n6Mo](https://youtu.be/b1lClf_n6Mo)

See below is the download link for the 4 best photos taken

<https://ln2.sync.com/dl/60eaa4330/b8u634ur-ng7szncn-96gw96qq-h9srar5h>



NATIONAL VETERANS  
**WHEELCHAIR  
GAMES**  
August 8 –13, 2021 • New York City

# DOWNLOAD THE NVWG MOBILE APP!

THE NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES HAS GONE MOBILE!

- Go-to Resource for Games Information
- Interactive Expo Guide & Floor Plan
- Real-time Schedule Updates
- Notifications Throughout the Week

Everything you need for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games is on our mobile app. Here's three ways you can download it to your smart device:

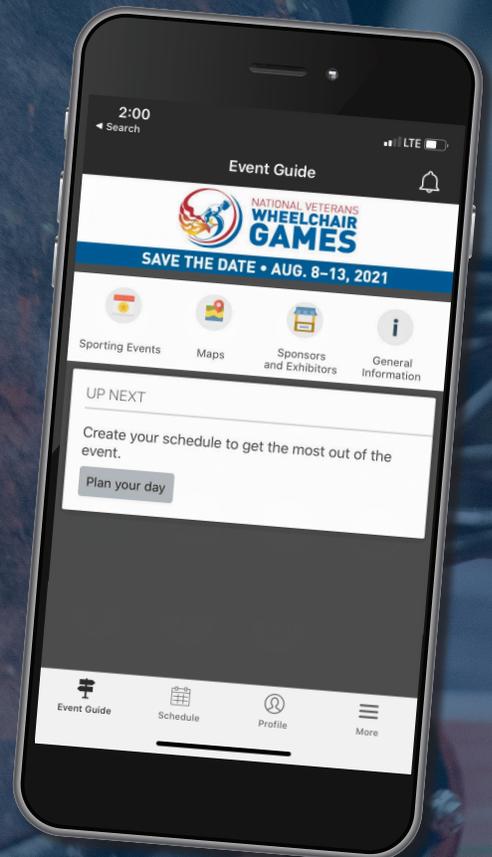
1. Go to <https://crowd.cc/s/3FcqE> to download now.
2. Search the App Store for NVWG
3. Open your NVWG app from last year. Tap the profile and hit "Switch Event" to view this year's content.



Available on the  
Google play



Download on the  
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Virgil Moppin, Jr. and Robert Ray



I am Candice Caesar, your new Membership Director. Please help me by updating your contact information. A handful of you have received calls from me or received something in the mail during your birthday month. If you have not, that is a sign you need to update your contact information. Help me to help to celebrate you in 2021. Please email your current home address, email address and your phone number to:

[kandikaneruns@gmail.com](mailto:kandikaneruns@gmail.com)



REST IN PEACE

Kelvin Wilcher  
Herman Bragg

## TEXAS CHAPTER PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA NEWSLETTER SAH PROGRAM CHANGES

By Gregory Treacy, SNSO  
Houston VA Regional office

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced important changes to the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program. The SAH program administers grants to Service Members and Veterans with certain severe service-connected disabilities. SAH grants assist with building, remodeling or purchasing an adapted home and help seriously disabled Veterans live more independently.

Under Public Law 116-154, "The Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019" amends existing laws to expand grant benefits to the most seriously disabled Service Members and Veterans. Among the new changes, the SAH benefit has expanded eligibility to those Service Members and Veterans with service-connected blindness, but no accompanying disability.

### Changes to the SAH program under PL 116-154 include:

- Veterans rated with a service-connected blindness disability, without a loss or loss of use of a lower extremity are now eligible for the SAH grant.
- Statute now reflects that all SAH-qualifying disabilities must be permanent. These changes became effective on August 8, 2020.
- The lifetime grant usage is no longer limited to three uses for each individual. Eligible Service Members and Veterans are now able to use the grant a total of six times.
- VA is authorized to approve up to 120 grants per year, an increase from the previous statutory limit of 30 per fiscal year for Veterans and Service members who experienced the loss or loss of use of *one* lower extremity after September 11, 2001.
- The aggregate limit amount for the SAH grant has been raised to \$100,896, and the SHA grant has been increased to \$20,215.

Veterans and Service Members may now be eligible for an additional use of their SAH benefit after 10 years, beginning on October 1, 2030.

To obtain more information about the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant at VA, visit:

<https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/disability-housing-grants/>. For more information about the VA Home Loan Program, visit <https://www.va.gov/housing-assistance/home-loans/>. If you have any questions related to VA Home Loans or any specific issues in your area, please contact the Regional Loan Center with jurisdiction in your state, which is listed online at: [http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/contact\\_rlc\\_info.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/contact_rlc_info.asp).

Your friendly neighborhood PVA National Service Officers stand by to assist.

Although Texas Governor Gregg Abbott has lifted the statewide mask mandate effective Wednesday, March 10th, Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital continues to require a face covering by all staff and visitors at all times.

As a federal organization, this policy can and will remain in place even if state or local masking requirements change. VA is also continuing to conduct daily screenings upon entry, practicing physical distancing, require frequent handwashing and other safety measures for their employees' safety.

You can read more on the impact of masks on slowing the spread of COVID-19 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).



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*Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.*

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## **PVA'S PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2021 ARE NOW ONLINE**

PVA's 2021 policy priorities are now available on [pva.org](http://pva.org). Our priorities include: improving the VA health care system and available services, improving VA benefits, and improving and protecting the systems and civil rights that support people with disabilities. PVA's full list of priorities is available [here](#).

## **SENATE CONFIRMS VA SECRETARY**

On February 8, the Senate voted 87-7 to confirm Denis McDonough to be the next VA Secretary. In a [statement](#) released following McDonough's confirmation, PVA Executive Director Carl Blake stated, "PVA has enjoyed a close relationship with the VA in the past and hopes to build upon that rich history with an even more collaborative and transparent partnership." Blake also stated that, "With a career in public service, we are hopeful Secretary McDonough's understanding of government and politics will help him navigate the challenges inherent in the second-largest federal agency, and America's most complex health care and benefits system." At the end of January, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held a [hearing](#) on McDonough's nomination. During the hearing, Secretary McDonough told Committee members that most of his decisions would be based on whether they increase access and improve outcomes for veterans.

## **INDEPENDENT BUDGET VETERANS AGENDA AND VA BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS RELEASED**

On February 1, the Independent Budget Veterans Service Organizations (IBVSOs)—DAV (Disabled American Veterans), PVA, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) released The Independent Budget: [Veterans Agenda for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress](#) and our [VA budget recommendations](#) for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 advance appropriations. In the Veterans Agenda for the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, the IBVSOs elected to focus on 11 critical issues addressing health care, benefits, and education and employment. Several of the critical issues, including ensuring veterans access to long-term care and support services and sufficient VA health care staffing, directly relate to PVA priorities.

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For FY 2022, the IB recommends Congress appropriate approximately \$120.3 billion for all VA programs and services, a 10.2 percent increase over FY 2021 appropriations levels. The IB estimates the VA health care system will require \$81.5 billion in FY 2022, an 8.5 percent increase, to provide care to more than seven million unique users. This recommendation would allow VA to fill over 10,000 health care vacancies, complete the caregiver program expansion, increase home-based long-term care services, and address inequities in health care delivery to women and minority veterans.

## **\$2.25 MILLION AVAILABLE IN AMTRAK DOJ SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

On January 29, Amtrak began accepting claims for monetary compensation from passengers with mobility disabilities who were not able to travel or wanted to travel but were denied service at 78 Amtrak stations due to physical barriers in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Claims must be submitted by May 29, 2021.

Amtrak was given 20 years to comply with the ADA and in 2013 the National Disability Rights Network filed multiple complaints with the Department of Justice (DOJ) claiming that Amtrak was out of compliance as they were a public service and were subject to Title II requirements. DOJ in a 2015 letter of findings submitted that Amtrak was indeed out of compliance as of July 27, 2010, and found systemic violations including:

**Parking:** Amtrak failed to make parking readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the Department of Transportation (DOT) Standards. For example, access aisles were too narrow or not adjacent to the parking space. Some spaces were not on an accessible route or the shortest distance to the entrance.

**Routes from Accessible Parking to Buildings:** Amtrak failed to make the routes from accessible parking, public streets, sidewalks, and public transportation stops to the entrances of buildings accessible to individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards. For example, the running slopes and cross slopes of some walking surfaces and ramps were too steep, other surfaces along certain routes were not stable, firm, and slip resistant.

**Building Entrances:** Amtrak failed to make building entrances readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards. For example, the entrances at some of these buildings had door openings that were too narrow, or had doors with maneuvering clearances that were too small.

**Waiting Areas:** Amtrak failed to make waiting areas readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards. For example, routes throughout the waiting areas at particular stations had excessive cross slopes or were too narrow.

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**Elevators:** Amtrak failed to make elevators readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards, including at the following stations: Atlanta, Georgia; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Marshall, Texas.

**Toilet Rooms:** Amtrak failed to make toilet rooms in buildings readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards. For example, some station toilet room doors lacked maneuvering clearance for wheelchairs, and some station toilet room doors had hardware that required tight grasping, pinching, and twisting of the wrist to operate.

**Passenger Platforms:** Amtrak failed to make passenger platforms readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards at 29 stations. Several passenger platforms had running and cross slopes that were too steep, and some passenger platforms had no detectable warnings at the boarding edges.

**Passenger Platform Heights and Gaps:** Amtrak failed to make the passenger platforms readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities as prescribed by the DOT Standards at 10 stations. These stations had excessive horizontal gaps or vertical height differences between the passenger platforms and the rail car floors.

Under the agreement, Amtrak has committed to make its intercity rail stations accessible, prioritizing stations with the most significant barriers to access. Over the next 10 years, Amtrak will design at least 135 stations to be accessible, complete construction at 90 of those stations, and have at least 45 more under construction. Amtrak will also train staff on ADA requirements and implement an agreed-upon process for accepting and handling ADA complaints.

For a list of stations and information about how to file a claim see the [DOJ announcement](#).

## NEW MASK MANDATE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AND HUBS

Following the issuance of an Executive Order, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued an [Order](#) on January 29 requiring travelers to wear masks on public conveyances, including airplanes, trains, subways, taxis, and buses, to prevent the spread of COVID. Operators of transportation hubs must also require all persons to wear a mask when entering or on the premises of a transportation hub. The CDC Order exempts from the mask requirement people with disabilities who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, for reasons related to the disability.

In response to COVID-19, U.S. and foreign air carriers generally have implemented policies requiring passengers to wear masks onboard aircraft even before the issuance of the Executive Order and the CDC Order. Some carriers have adopted policies that expressly allow “no exceptions” to the mask requirement other than for children under the age of two. Following the CDC Order, DOT has released a notice of enforcement policy stating that airlines are expected

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to review their face mask policies immediately and to revise them as necessary to comply with the Air Carrier Access Act.

The Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) security procedures also now require that all individuals must wear masks at the checkpoints and baggage screening locations. In the event that a person with a disability advises a TSA Officer that they have a disability that prevents them from wearing a mask, the TSA Officer may notify a supervisor to assist. Medical documentation to support an exemption from the mask-wearing mandate should be on the passenger's licensed physician's letterhead, and should include the passenger's name, and clearly state that he or she cannot wear or safely wear a mask. Passengers may be asked if they can wear a mask during screening for a short-duration, only when additional screening may be required (e.g., pat-down) and social distancing is not possible. If passengers have concerns before, during, or after your screening, they may ask for a Passenger Support Specialist or Supervisory TSA Officer.

## NEWS ITEMS OF NOTE

- A Framework for Integrating Family Caregivers into the Health Care Team

RAND Corporation published a study in mid-January examining the role of family caregivers in a health care team and making recommendations for effective involvement of caregivers in supporting loved ones with disabilities or chronic health conditions. Four themes around barriers to integrating caregivers into health care teams emerged from the study report including: (1) identifying caregivers; (2) communication and information-sharing; (3) time limitations and competing demands; and (4) trust and cultural barriers. The authors also identified six policy areas in which initiatives could mitigate these barriers: (1) identify and record information on family caregivers; (2) incentivize providers to engage with family caregivers; (3) invest in programs that provide supportive services for family caregivers; (4) expand access to and funding for care coordinators to support caregivers and connect them to clinical information; (5) implement training programs for providers and caregivers to facilitate effective communication; and (6) develop, test, and improve caregiver access to technologies that foster caregiver-provider care integration and information-sharing. A downloadable version of the report can be found [here](#).

- ODEP Posts Recommendations on eRecruiting Screening Systems

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) on Disability Inclusion and Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT) have released the ["Checklist for Employers: Facilitating the Hiring of People with Disabilities Through the Use of eRecruiting Screening Systems, Including AI."](#) eRecruiting systems, including artificial intelligence, are becoming more commonly

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used to screen candidates, streamline the application process, provide training, disseminate information to employees, and increase productivity in the workplace. This publication highlights questions and issues that business leaders, human resources personnel, equal employment opportunity managers, and procurement officers should consider about contracts with vendors regarding the content of eRecruiting screening tools.

- NCSL Report on COVID-19's Impact on Disability Employment and the Economy

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) published a report, "[The Pandemic's Effect on the Economy and Workers](#)," that examines economic data and workforce trends following the emergence of COVID-19. The report shows how the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of telework and digital services, which present new employment opportunities for people with disabilities, and features federal and state responses to the pandemic. The report is the first in a series developed in collaboration with the State Exchange on Employment & Disability on the opportunities and challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the employment of people with disabilities.

- Recovery Stalls for People with Disabilities

The [January 2020 Jobs Report - National Trends in Disability Employment](#) was recently issued by Kessler Foundation and the University of New Hampshire. As COVID-19 outbreaks continue to affect national and local economies, the job market struggled to maintain momentum, according to the Monthly Update (nTIDE). The report does note that, in the coming months, prospects for recovery may improve as vaccine availability increases and the federal government implements new public health measures and considers additional economic relief.

## WEBINARS

- U.S. Access Board Webinar: Medical Care and Long-Term Care Facilities

The next webinar in the U.S. Access Board's free monthly series will take place March 4 from 2:30 – 4:00 pm ET and will provide an in-depth review of ADA and Architectural Barriers Act requirements for medical care and long-term care facilities, including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes, and other facilities. The presenters will review scoping and technical requirements for exam rooms, patient bedrooms, bathrooms, accessible routes, accessible parking, and other spaces and elements. They will also provide a brief overview on the Board's voluntary Medical Diagnostic Equipment Standards. Visit [www.accessibilityonline.org](http://www.accessibilityonline.org) for more information or to register.

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- PVA Webinar: Access to the COVID Vaccine for SCI/D Veterans

In an effort to provide our members with more information about VA's rollout of the COVID vaccine, we are hosting a webinar with VA on Friday, February 26 at 1:00 pm ET. Please register in advance for this webinar [here](#). This webinar will present members with an opportunity to hear directly from VA leadership about the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Donate your gently used clothing and household items to help support our chapter. Please be sure to mention you'd like your donation to benefit the TEXAS PARALYZED VETERANS. All donations are tax deductible. To schedule a pickup please call:**

**346-319-2222**



**Don't**



Remove hangers, check the pockets and wash if possible. Don't forget we need shoes, purses, and accessories.

Even towels and bedding that are threadbare can have a second life as they are used for cleaning up, and recycling.



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*Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.*

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## **PVA NATIONAL PRESIDENT DAVID ZURFLUH TO TESTIFY ON MARCH 4**

On March 4 at 10:00 AM ET, PVA National President David Zurfluh will testify, along with leaders of other veterans service organizations, before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on our 2021 legislative priorities. The hearing is virtual and will be available for viewing [here](#). Please invite all PVA members, their families, and caregivers to watch this important testimony.

## **PRIORITY ACCESS TO THE VACCINE NOW AVAILABLE TO ALL SCI/D VETERANS**

On February 19, VA formally announced that SCI/D veterans will now have priority access to the COVID vaccine regardless of age. VA's decision is based on data showing that SCI/D veterans who contract COVID have higher adverse outcomes. As a result, all veterans with SCI/D, are now eligible for the vaccine through VA subject to limitations based on supply.

Caregivers who are not part of VA's comprehensive caregiver program are still not currently eligible for the vaccine through VA. On February 24, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Mark Takano (D-CA) and Ranking Member Mike Bost (R-IL) introduced legislation, the "VA VACCINE Act," (H.R. 1276) that would make more caregivers eligible to receive the vaccine through VA, including those who are in the general caregiver program and those who provide care through the Bowel and Bladder program. PVA supports this legislation. That same day, Dr. Richard Stone, Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, testified before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee about access to the vaccine through VA. To view the hearing, please click [here](#).

## **COVID-19 RELIEF BILL WOULD PROVIDE \$17B TO VA**

On February 11, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee passed its portion of the latest COVID response package, the "American Rescue Plan," along a party line vote. The package would provide approximately \$17 billion for VA. Of that amount, \$13.5 billion would help VA provide health care services and related support to eligible veterans, including COVID-19 vaccine distribution, expanded mental health care, enhanced telehealth capabilities, community care, extended support for veterans who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, and personal protective equipment (PPE) and supplies for clinical employees.

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Much of the remaining amount would help mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the benefits claims and appeals backlog (\$272 million); accelerate the Department's supply chain modernization efforts and improve its preparedness and response to public health emergencies (\$100 million); support COVID-19 response, staff and veteran safety, and preparedness at State Veterans Homes (\$750 million); and provide up to 12 months of retraining assistance for veterans who are unemployed due to COVID-19 and do not have other veteran education benefits (\$386 million). Other language in the bill directs VA to waive any co-pays for all VA medical appointments from April 6, 2020, through September 30, 2021, which, if passed in the final bill, would require the Department to reimburse veterans who have already paid. The entire bill will be subject to considerable debate and negotiation in the coming days, so changes are likely. It is advancing largely along party lines but is expected to receive floor time and votes in both chambers during the month of March.

## HOUSE APPROPRIATORS EXAMINE VA'S COVID RESPONSE

On February 19, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies held a [virtual hearing](#) to assess how well VA is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics covered during the hearing included the COVID vaccine rollout and distribution, therapies for COVID-19 patients, the utilization of telehealth, and health care accessibility in rural and hard-to-reach communities. Dr. Richard Stone, Acting Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration, told the panel that the limited vaccine supply has inhibited the Department's ability to distribute the vaccine to veterans and VA staff. So far, VA has administered more than 1.3 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine; nearly one million of them went to veterans. He said VA is enrolling eligible veterans so they can receive the vaccine but made it clear that the Department does not have the supplies or authority to vaccinate the broader population of veterans who are not eligible for VA health care at this time.

Dr. Stone also spoke about COVID-related funding received last year and the Department's need for additional funding for its COVID-19 response. The Department already used \$6.5 billion of the more than \$19 billion Congress gave the Department last year through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The remaining amount will be committed this year and the additional funding Congress is now considering would go toward health care costs, personal protective equipment (PPE), and several large-scale modernization efforts. Dr. Stone also said VA has begun talking about the long-term ramifications of the pandemic. Stone said, "We know that there's a huge impact on deferred and delayed care that will begin to come in. We know that there's a huge effect on unemployment, where people lose their health insurance and come to us as a safety net."

## ANNUAL DISABILITY STATISTICS COMPENDIUM RELEASED

In a virtual presentation over several days in mid-February, the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) released its annual compendium of disability statistics and related reports. The Compendium gathers the most recent national statistics on people with disabilities from various federal programs and agencies and provides current statistics and time trends related to the prevalence of disabilities as well as

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key indicators on employment, health, community living, and other outcomes of importance in monitoring the well-being of individuals with disabilities.

Accompanying the Compendium is an Annual Report that focuses on national trends from year to year. Findings in the 2020 report cover the period 2018 to 2019. Among the statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS) highlighted was an increase in the size of the U.S. population with disabilities from 13.1 percent in 2018 to 13.2 percent in 2019. In raw numbers, that meant that, of the 327,011,000 people in the U.S. in 2019, 43,227,000 identified as people with disabilities. In 2019, the employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities was 38.9 percent compared to 78.6 percent for those without disabilities, which created an employment gap of 39.8 percent. The employment gap in 2018 had been 40.3 percent. Data also reflected an increase in the “disablement index” which researchers describe as the degree to which the environment impacts the ability of individuals with disabilities to interact with their community. State reports provide county level data on prevalence of people with disabilities, employment rates for people with disabilities, and numbers and percentages of those with disabilities living in poverty.

Using data from the ACS and Veterans Benefits Administration, a chapter on veterans with disabilities presented tables showing that, in 2019, 1,698,714 individuals ages 18 and over living in the community reported having a military service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or more. Of the veterans with disabilities ages 18-64 years living in the community, 247,410 individuals lived in poverty—a poverty rate of 15.2 percent. A table showing the prevalence rate of veterans with disabilities among state populations indicated that Minnesota had the lowest prevalence rate (13.3 percent) while Arkansas had the highest prevalence rate (27.5 percent).

The Compendium, Annual Report, and state reports can be found [here](#). The virtual release featured presentations from the Census Bureau, the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy and other federal agencies as well as focused workshops on the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities and social inequities affecting African Americans with disabilities. The archived event can be found [here](#).

## NEWS ITEMS OF NOTE

- DOL VETS Deputy Assistant Secretary Assumes Post

Mr. James D. Rodriguez has taken his place as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy while serving as Acting Assistant Secretary within the Department of Labor’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service. He will serve in the acting capacity until a permanent Assistant Secretary is nominated and confirmed by the Senate. Prior to his recent appointment, Mr. Rodriguez served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Office of Warrior Care Policy, Office of the Secretary of Defense from 2014 through 2017. Mr. Rodriguez spent several years in the corporate arena but prior to that served twenty-one years in the United States Marine Corps. During his final duty assignment at Balboa Naval Hospital, he was the Senior Enlisted Leader/Advisor to the Officer in Charge of the Wounded Warrior Battalion, where he was responsible for the rehabilitation, transition, professional development, and education of service members with service-connected

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disabilities.

- VA OIG Report, “Insufficient Oversight for Issuing Prosthetic Supplies and Devices”

According to a recent VA Office of Inspector General Report, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has oversight weaknesses that led to PSAS staff improperly cloning consults. Consequently, VHA improperly issued an estimated \$15.8 million in prosthetic supplies during (calendar year) 2017. In contrast, the audit team determined that VHA maintained adequate oversight to prevent duplicate supply issuance. Additionally, the OIG found that while six percent of transactions for supplies to deceased veterans were improper, the team did not identify evidence of fraud. The report is available [here](#).

- Disenrolled from TRICARE Select? Here’s How to Reinstate Your Coverage

As of January 1, 2021, military retirees who enlisted prior to 2018 and use TRICARE Select programs are required to pay enrollment fees each month. If you didn’t set up your enrollment fees for [TRICARE Select](#) or [TRICARE Overseas Program Select](#) coverage last year, you were disenrolled as of December 31, 2020. If you want to have TRICARE Select coverage this year, you must request reinstatement with your TRICARE contractor. You have until June 30, 2021, to make your request. Click [here](#) to learn more.

- Space A Travel for Eligible Dependents of Disabled Veterans

A change in law two years ago allowed permanently and totally disabled veterans to take advantage of military Space A travel within the continental US (CONUS), or directly between the CONUS and Alaska, Hawaii, or U.S. territories. Late last year, the Department of Defense (DOD) updated its Space A [guidance](#) to allow eligible dependent family members of these veterans to travel with them. For now, Space A travel is strictly limited to official travel due to the pandemic. Once DOD resumes normal flight operations, you may want to check it out and see if it is a viable option for you and your eligible dependents. For up-to-date information about military Space A travel, visit the Air Mobility Command’s [Space-A travel website](#).

## SURVEY

- Reeve Foundation Survey on COVID-19 Vaccine Experiences

The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation is inviting persons with SCI/D to take part in a [survey](#) about the COVID-19 vaccine. They would like to hear about peoples' plans regarding the vaccine, if it's available to them now, their sense of the government's response to distribution of the vaccine and more. The data collected from this survey will be used to advocate for the community around the COVID-19 vaccine. The survey is anonymous and no personal identifying information will be collected.

# March & April Birthdays

David McCreery

Lloyd Lindsey

Leo Andrade Jr.

Joseph Bell

Thomas Slagle

Rebecca Johnson

Marshall Hicks

George Kawanami

William Chavez

Jerry Turner

Kevin Kuddes

Gabriel Diaz De Leon Jr.

Philip Jones

John Shores Sr.

Svend Svendsen

Maurice Bullard

Sammie King Jr.

Alex Williams

Marcus Montieth

Robert Lefevé

Peter Simmons

Hugh (Dick) Morgan

Albert Ellis

David Bradshaw

Raul Ramirez

Tedd Shelton

Willie Gadison

Paul Stanford

William Neuls Jr.

Abel Gonzales

Luther Sanders

Howard Van Noy Sr.

Scott McDonald

Darrell Wilson

David Good

Leroy Johnson

Cruz Rivas

William Sutherland

Peter Westerfield

Edward Tuggle

Lorinda Carr

Wesley Howard

Anne Collins

Michael Levine

Clarence Walton

Thomas Turner Jr.

Donald Howard

Robert Poffinbarger

Piedad Tristan

Paul Martinez

Carl Butler

Edward Sterner

Philip Stewart

Francisco Nuncio

Peter Shaver

Pete Zavala

Christopher Sullivan

Jose Perez

Javier Barraza

Kerry Reyna

Mary Beard

Johnny Treadwell

Carlos Ramos-Moll

Baltazar Coronado

Calvin Greene

Josue Lopez

Daniel Barton

Alfredo Ramos

Alex Benoit

Donald Moore

Steven Hoffman

Jason Mead

Sylvester Barner

Ulysses Wicker

Thomas Sagpao

Calvin Lambert

Joe James

Gregory Rosales

Thomas Taylor

Terrence Young

Kristen Reyna

Harold Brown Jr.

David Pruitt

Tammy Barrett

Robert Trevino

Zachary Jones

Gerald Gates

Johnny Beamon

Robert Beeney

Robin Willis

Arthur Henderson

Victor Galan

Jermaine Lewis

James Coleman

# Become A Donor

**Annual contributions for  
2019-2020 will be as follows:**

Platinum Donor	\$1,000 or more
Titanium Donor	\$500 – \$999
Gold Donor	\$250 – \$499
Silver Donor	\$100 – \$249
Bronze Donor	\$5 – \$99



## 2020-2021 DONOR CLUB as of Oct 2020

**Platinum:** Greater Houston Community Foundation, Wayne & Joann Moore Charitable Foundation, Mandel Estate, VFW Auxiliary Thomson-Patton-ZahnIsabel Gonzalez, William Rawles, Home Depot, Barbara Weiszhaar, Network for Good, Jacqueline Hailey

**Titanium:** Adaptive Driving Access, David Boullion, John Lay, Alamo Chapter SCI, Gabriel Trinidad, William Rawles, USAA

**Gold:** Lucy Gonzales, Mike Seely, True Vine Missionary Baptist Church, William & Cheryl Pitts, Thi Buu, Mark Vrataric, Summer Chesson, Tym & Gerry Kelley

**Silver:** Angela & Carmen Gonzalez, Adam Mejia, Chris & Jamie Thomas, Greg Menotti, Kickin Cajun, Shawn Moore, Bill Manning, Ben Elizondo, Chris Chaney, Gabriel Rodriguez, James Howard, Melvin Beene, Philip Breeden, Raul Rios Jr., Frank Daebelliehn, Gordon McKissack, James McKinney, Kimberly Hoover, Rindy Saunders, Susan Orr, Stubbs Harley Davidson, Carol McDonald, Team Rodke, Frontstream, Anand Mantrala, Del Ray Mounts, Mark & Brenda Gribbin, Ralph Weston, Rick & Anna Trish McDaniel, Shon & Karen Qualis, Charlene Kennedy, James McLaughlin, Laurie Stiteler, Laurie Wilson, Mary Ann Heller, Jim Baccus, Mike Seely, Michael Taggart, Victoria Luna Palencia, Tom Byrd, Robin Allshouse, Brandy Sausse, Christopher Carroll, Garry & Margaret Schoonover, Vincent Morrison, Gabrielle Lynch, Diane Green

**Bronze:** Rose Stein, Candice Caesar, Houston Cutlery, Colleen Jennings, Fund, Sci Fi Toys, Chris Montes, Juana Pagel, Thyron Marshall, Richard DeVlugt, Julie Bailey, Kathy Fair, Dina Luna, The Barbbque Store, John Kelley, Sean & Judi Oliver, Lisa Clark, Brian Heflin, Colleen Jennings, Janssen Giving Fund, Kay Clauson, Kim Patel, Marlon Punch, Mary Fern Sword, Robert & Elizabeth Boyer, Sandra Vasek, Suhr Foundation, Wayne Carey, Bradley Lane, Debra Shirey, Jose Martinez, Kostas Lambrakos, Bonnie Elizabeth Specter, Christopher Thomas, Nina Dennis, Byron Rogers, DJ & KL Byler, Gary Hudson, Glenn Ledbetter, Thyron Marshall, Kevin Cismowski, Timothy McElroy, Brent McNguyen, Robert Corbin, Carmen Matos, Jaynee Williams, Mary Gayle, Intel Foundation, Thomas Ashbaugh, Elizabeth Pena, Leslie Jones, Mahsa Azadi, Abbott Lab, Mr & Mrs Randall Smith, Cadapakam Venkatramani, Global Rewards Solutions, Mary Burwitz, Lillian Blinka, Betty & Herbert Neinmann, Ray & Jenny Schilke, Hermelinda Romero, Achievers, Carolyn Hill, Alexia Vlosky, Connie Johnson, Dan & Judy Edwards, Veronica Mendoza, Kim Palma, Ovintiv Canada, Total Quality Logistics



## CLASSIFIEDS / SERVICES /ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ADVERTISE WITH THE SPEEDY GAZETTE!

All submissions for the Classified Section of the SPEEDY GAZETTE must be submitted to the TPVA Office no later than the 1st of the month. The charge is \$15.00 for 15 words (each additional word is \$.25 cents). Payment must accompany the ad. If you are a member in good standing with TPVA, you may place a 15-word ad for FREE! An incentive of a 10% discount applies on ANNUAL commitments.

Display Advertisements: to offset some of the cost of printing and mailing the SPEEDY GAZETTE, the following ad rates apply:

SIZE:	MONTHLY:	ANNUAL (Approximately 6 issues per year):
Business Card	\$20.00	\$120.00 less 10% = \$108.00
¼ Page	\$30.00	\$180.00 less 10% = \$162.00
½ Page	\$55.00	\$330.00 less 10% = \$297.00
Full Page:	\$125.00	\$750.00 less 10% = \$675.00

Please call 1-800-933-4261 or 713-520-8782 (EXT. 4) to place a Display Advertisement or Classified

# Getting Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again with Indego®



New VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® Exoskeleton at no cost.

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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](mailto:support.indego@parker.com)

Phone: 844-846-3346



Watch Marine Veteran Steve Holbert's story at [www.indego.com/veterans](http://www.indego.com/veterans)





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Contact ReWalk for more Information:  
[rewalk.com/contact](https://rewalk.com/contact) or  
**508.251.1154** option 2

## New Membership Rewards Program

Hello Texas Paralyzed Veterans of America Members! Your BOD just implemented a new membership rewards program. It's a very simple program. **During your birth month**, just contact the Chapter Office or one of your Board of Directors and let them know you want to participate. At the end of each month a drawing will be held and five lucky members will each receive a gift card worth \$200 to spend however you wish.

As long as you're on the phone with us, let us know how you're doing. Get an update on the latest Chapter news and events. You can also make sure your phone number and address are up to date. Remember we're an organization made up of members trying to help other members. We need to know who you are, where you are and what kind of concerns or ideas you may have. Plus you may be able to volunteer some time with us.

Remember if it's your **Birth Month**, all that it takes for a chance at a \$200 Birthday gift is just a phone call. If you don't call in, you won't be entered.

Frank Daebelliehn 281-256-5652 frankd@texaspva  
Steve Holbert 281-359-2909 steveh@texaspva.org  
Jason Mead 713-553-4095 offrdcwby@gmail.com  
Willard Allen 210-413-4333 allenwillard@gmail.com  
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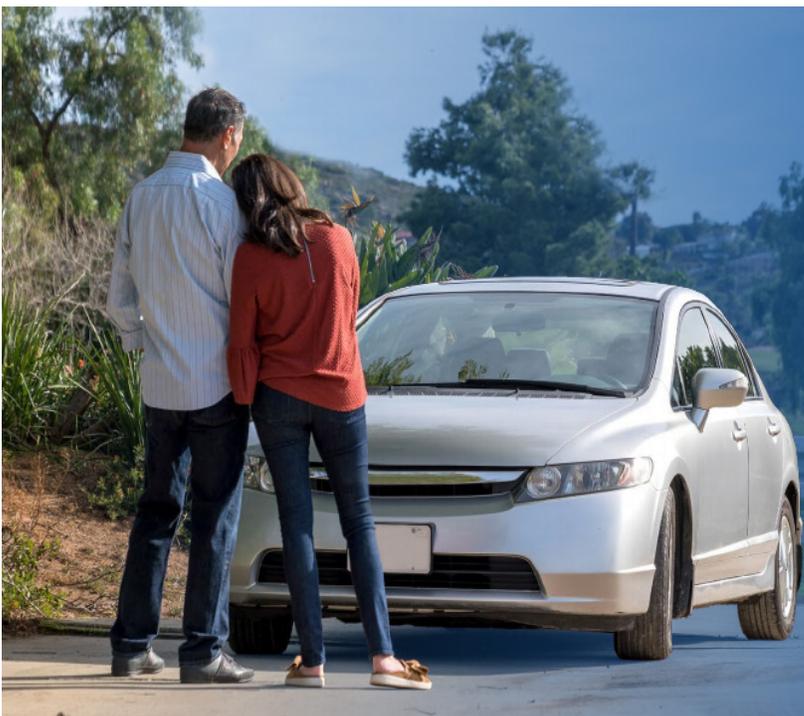
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