

Speedy Gazette

"Improving Lives... Building Futures"



PVA

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Texas Chapter

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March 2023





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A Message from our President

Good Day Texas Chapter Family

I hope the start to the New Year is finding everyone working to empower themselves toward a great future. We have a lot going on in the chapter and I hope everyone is able to get out of the house and enjoy our beautiful weather (on the warm days that is). The weather has been so crazy, I don't know about you but I am ready for spring. The great news is we are seeing more and more of our members coming out for the chapter outings, hunting trips and fishing events. Please invite all members to events coming up. Keep a watch on the calendar.

We continue to receive donated equipment and have two vans that will be listed in this newsletter. Please look them over and if you are in need please email the office and get your name on the list for items that will help you with your day to day needs.

I would like to request ideas for fundraisers and fun events you would like to see for your enjoyment. Don't forget about the \$120.00 available each year for your entertainment. Surprise your spouse by taking him/her out for dinner or a movie or both. Send in your receipts to the office for a reimbursement of \$120.00 of your expenses. If you like to cook, go buy a great dinner and prepare it for your loved one and turn that receipt in. The Kill'n Clays is coming up, it's our annual fundraiser in San Antonio. Dust off your shotgun and come out and show off your skills. If anything just have a good time and enjoy a meal and intermingle with other members.

I personally am working on a change to the VA system. Those eligible for the automotive grant you can actually have two vehicles. I'm currently working on getting my camper listed as my second vehicle so I can get a under vehicle lift to allow me to gain access to the camper. Currently the VA says that a vehicle is one with a motor and transmission I'm working on getting this changed so those of you who want to get your family out and away on vacation and want to purchase a camper can do so to allow you the ability to get in and out of your camper. The VA shouldn't stop us from having fun with our family and being able to travel. If you've run into this roadblock yourself drop me an e-mail let me know the struggles you have. Or if there's anything else you're struggling with at the VA drop me an e-mail and we'll see what we can do to help.

Sincerely

Frank R. Daebelliehn

President

PVA, Texas Chapter

frankd@texaspva.org

When Can I Drive Again
By Armando De La Rosa, SBA

Over the years, I have worked with many veterans who have suffered spinal cord injury/disorders (SCI/D) and the most frequently asked question I receive is, “When can I drive again?”. Many veterans who were injured during, and post active duty, feel they have lost their independence. One thing that was most important in their lives post injuries was to regain their freedom by relearning how to drive to overcome their newest challenge.

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) has a Driver’s Rehab Program named, “Driver’s Training” and currently, there are only 50 VA Medical Centers that can offer this service to both inpatients and outpatients (check with your healthcare provider to find the nearest location). “Driver’s Training” must be provided by a “Driver’s Rehabilitation Specialist” who is a therapist that is licensed, registered, or certified by the state to complete this training (per VHA Directive 1173.16).

To be seen by your local Driver’s Rehabilitation Specialist, your clinical team will need to complete an evaluation before submitting a consult to the specialist. The records will be reviewed for medical necessity so all recorded information must be directed toward the diagnosis or disability that best explains why the patient is receiving driver rehabilitation. Upon completion of the reviewal process, the rehabilitation specialist will make suggestions as to the direction of the training.

The Rehab Specialist can prescribe adaptive equipment required to maximize function and safety on the road. The Rehab Specialist can also provide equipment training with the patients as well as take precautions to ensure that the vehicle is secure for transport. (per VHA Directive 1173.16)

Before completing the in-car training, the veteran will need to schedule a driving examination at the DMV. The DMV will issue a Certificate of Training to the veteran at this time, this is key to knowing you have completed the course. The Driver’s Trainer can then notify your clinic team and prosthetic to allow the appropriate modification to be completed.

If there has been a change in your medical status, your physician will need to submit a new consult to the Driver’s Rehabilitation Specialist and request to review your current medical assessment.

If you need any further assistance or have any additional questions, please contact your local NSO.

ADULT RESEARCH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: WITH SPINAL CORD INJURY

WHO: If you are between the ages of 18-75 **AND** sustained a spinal cord injury over 6 months ago, you may qualify for participation.

WHAT: This project is examining whether or not practicing movements with both hands/arms with the use of Non-Invasive Brain Stimulation will affect how the brain communicates with those hand/arm muscles.

Participants will be asked to use hand and/or arm movements to follow instructions given on a computer screen and by research investigators.

- Each testing session will last up to 2-2.5 hours.
- Up to 2-3 visits will be scheduled according to your preference and availability.
- Compensation will be provided for your time and effort.

WHERE: Motor Neuroscience Lab
The department of Health and Kinesiology
2929 Research Pkwy
College Station, TX 77845

CONTACT: yx1907@tamu.edu or 979-862-3392

TAMU IRB#: IRB2020-0071F: IRB Approval Date: 09/02/2020

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

South Texas Veterans Health Care System

SENT ON BEHALF OF SOUTH TEXAS VETERANS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

As you know, the PACT Act is the largest expansion of Veteran health care and benefits in decades. Millions of Veterans, their families, and their survivors could be positively impacted by this landmark legislation, and we at VA want to make sure that every one of them gets the benefits and health care they deserve.

To that end, South Texas Veterans Health Care System is hosting a PACT Act Week of Action event to inform Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors about the PACT Act and encourage them to apply for the toxic exposure-related health care and benefits they have earned. This is one of 80+ Week of Action events at VA facilities nationwide between December 10th and 17th. Our event will feature a 30-minute speaking program and overview of PACT Act. VA staff will also be present to help Veterans to apply for benefits, complete toxic exposure screenings, and enroll in VA health care.

The PACT Act event for the San Antonio Northwest Health Care Center scheduled for Monday, December 12 is cancelled. The Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital scheduled for December 14 remains. There is a time change on the event, which is 2-6 p.m.

You are a tireless advocate for Veterans, and we at VA so appreciate your partnership in serving Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors as well as they have served our country.

Thank you for all you do. I hope you can join us to spread the word about this historic expansion of Veteran benefits and care. For additional information, please contact the Office of Public Affairs at (210) 617-5274.

Assistive Eating Device

Hello Houston PVA!

We recently launched an assistive eating device that may be of great benefit to some of your members. There is a huge difference between eating a whole burger or pizza slice vs. chopped up versions as must be the case with robotic equipment. An independent review video is below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mhQ27xa42Xg&t=171s>

We are donating \$20 from each purchase to the PVA or ALS association. (alternating) Please send us an advertising rate card also. Thanks for the work you do! A short blurb about the product that might be applicable for your newsletter is below.

Best Regards,

Norm Gustafson MS, OT PS: social media word spreading is appreciated!

New Assistive Eating Device:

Individuals with significant upper extremity movement restrictions can now enjoy eating hot dogs, hamburgers, sandwiches, pizza and more independently.

Panini Eatzi, a newly launched non robotic eating device is already empowering hands free eating of tasty burgers ... and much more!

No batteries, no cords, no robotics ... the user's own head movement operates the device.

Panini Eatzi is available from Mercer County Rehab, a Veteran Owned Small Business and a VA approved vendor.

For more information or ordering please visit www.mercercountyrehab.com. and enter Panini Eatzi in the search bar or call 800-258-4212

ALS Medical Research Article:

Recently the FDA approved a small molecule drug for ALS. The drug slowed functional decline by 2 pts in 6 months. On the 48-point functional scale, two points is the difference between being able to walk vs using a wheelchair, feeding or bathing yourself, or breathing without a bipap. Furthermore, when analyzing the OLE data, it improved ALS survival by an average of 10 months in comparison with placebo & natural history. In approving this new drug with just one Phase II trial, the #FDA acknowledged it would exercise the "broadest of regulatory flexibility" for the "urgent unmet need" in #ALS.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

James Byrne
Ryan Cano
Stephanie Flores
Ray Gill
Patrick Kotzur
Richard Newton
Douglas Reeves
John Rimpson
Richard Roberts
Hashinto Takeshi
Jay Travis

REST IN PEACE



Rodney Lee
Steven Grant
Jack Soto



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of America**



Michael E. DeBakey Launches Inaugural ALS Clinic By: Greg Treacy, SNSO

It is my pleasure to report that the Houston Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center conducted its inaugural ALS Clinic this past Monday.

Pitchaiah Mandava M.D. is the Director of Clinic, with James Orenge M.D. the ALS Physician/Neurologist, and NP Richel Aliboso as the ALS Clinic Coordinator. The other disciplines included in the ALS Clinic are Social Worker, Respiratory Therapy, OT/PT, Dietician, Mental Health, Prosthetics, ALSA, and yours truly from PVA.

With the help of the PVA, the multi-disciplinary ALS Clinic's "Soft Open" on 12 September was a success. Dr. Mandava requested that only 3 Veterans be invited. Only 2 were able to make it, but the Team made it well worth their visit.

A Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony was conducted with the VAMC Chief of Staff Mark Kobelja, MD, Chief of Neurology, SCI Chief Sally Holmes, and ALS Veteran Ernest Henderson and his spouse Susan. Once I get the pictures from Public Relations, I'll forward them to you. It should make VA Headlines as well. One would think so.

They will begin seeing 3-4 Veterans every week on Mondays from 1:00-4:00 pm in the SCI Outpatient Clinic. For Veterans in the Houston VAMC catchment area interested in being scheduled for the clinic, contact me.

This is the reality of a plan that has been coming together for 8 years for me, and 2 years for Dr. Mandava at the VA since his appointment as the Director of the Clinic.

The Clinic Staff and I are confident the ALS Veterans in our area will find the Clinic as not only a medical resource, but a support resource as well.

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WILLS & ESTATES

CRIMINAL RECORD CLEARING

LANDLORD/ TENANT ISSUES

TAX & BANKRUPTCY

CONSUMER MATTERS

OTHER CIVIL LEGAL ISSUES

Every Friday beginning September 9th from 1 PM-
3:30 PM

MICHAEL E. DEBAKEY VA MEDICAL CENTER

Building 108A – Steps from the main medical center entrance

2002 HOLCOMBE BLVD. HOUSTON TX 77030

Services are dependent upon financial eligibility such as income and assets.

If you are unable to attend in person, visit us online at
www.legalhelphouston.org to apply for assistance.

**Do you
have urine
leakage?**



**You may qualify to be part of a
clinical trial examining a
medication to improve
symptoms of urine leakage in
people with spinal cord injury.**

For more information

Kate Randolph kmrandol@utmb.edu
Lauren Dawson Indawson@utmb.edu

***utmb* Health**

Working together to work wonders.

VA LIFE (Veterans Affairs Life Insurance)

By Deontre Williams, NSO II, Houston VARO

VA LIFE is the new VA Life Insurance Program, replacing the former Service Disabled Veteran Insurance (SDVI). The new insurance program will take effect on January 2023, and is applicable for all Veterans with service connected disabilities at ages 80 and below. Some Veterans over 81 could possibly be eligible as well, as long as they applied for disability compensation before age 81, and they received a new service connected disability after 81. The key feature of the new program is that a Veteran can be service connected from anywhere between 0% and 100% disabled with no time limit to apply. This would be beneficial for Veterans who have not been able to receive a rating above 0 percent service connection. No other insurance policy in the world is giving Veterans additional insurance coverage based on the fact that they have a service connected disability.

This program, created by Public Law 116-315, will have guaranteed acceptance, and will offer whole life policies that will not require medical exams or any kind of health care questionnaires. As long as premiums are paid, one could have insurance coverage for their entire life. And, fortunately, DOES NOT have a two-year window in which a Veteran can apply. Veterans would be able to sign up at any time for VA LIFE and would never have to worry about increases in premiums as the policy holder ages. Approvals would be instant with VA LIFE and coverages come in increments of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$40,000. Similar to what SDVI offered, but the supplemental life insurance coverage would take longer to be approved. Premiums are also expected to beat policies from private sector insurance plans which gives VA LIFE a great advantage to flourish. Rates will be better the earlier a Veteran applies and the policy would produce cash value that builds over the life of the policy after the first two years of enrollment. And again, premiums would never increase! Life Insurance is foundational in family financial planning, as 63% of adults have coverage to protect their spouse, children, or other beneficiaries.

Veterans currently possessing S-DVI policies remain in force until the full coverage of VA LIFE begins, as long as a Veteran's application for VA LIFE is received between Jan 1, 2023 and Dec 31, 2025. Afterwards, SDVI will close to new enrollment. Therefore, interested Veterans should apply by this date. With this being said, the Veteran would still be able to have life insurance coverage while waiting on the VA LIFE policy to become available.

The premium for VALIFE are fixed and based on your age and when you enroll. Monthly rates can be located at the table located at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp>. The rates are proposed based on current estimates and may change prior to implementation of VA Life on January 1, 2023. Under the new program there are no premium waivers.

VA Insurance services is making the application process easier for Veterans by improving their automation system for the "ultimate customer experience" through DocuSign. DocuSign was made available on the VA's Life Insurance website. DocuSign is a cloud-based software solution for sending and signing digital documents. This allows beneficiaries to have the option to electronically sign and submit forms to claim the proceeds of VA-issued life insurance policies.

If you are interested in applying for or learning more about VA Life (Veterans Affairs Life Insurance), you may visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp> Once the program is open, the application will be available online at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/VALife.asp>. Additionally, Veterans can receive email updates about VA LIFE by registering here: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USVAVALI/subscriber/new>. VA Life Insurance Call Center: 800-669-8477 (Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST). Also, you may contact your National Service Officer (NSO) if there are additional questions.

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



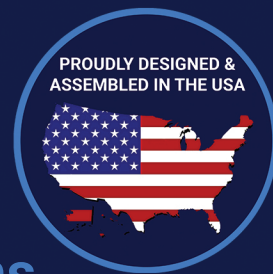
Don't



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.

Indego® Gets Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again



NEW VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® exoskeleton at NO COST!

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- ✓ Regain your independence
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Email: support.indego@parker.com



VA proposes updates to disability rating schedule



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CHRISTOPHER MORALES/U.S. AIR FORCE

■ The Department of Veterans Affairs has proposed changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities that pertain to the respiratory and auditory systems. The changes will incorporate medical advancements for treating certain disabilities and modern medical knowledge to more accurately compensate veterans for their service-connected disabilities, according to the VA.

“Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition in these body systems will not have their disability rating impacted when the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is updated,” said Thomas Murphy, the acting undersecretary for benefits.

Some of the proposed changes include modernizing the evaluation criteria for sleep apnea by evaluating it

based on the symptoms’ responsiveness to treatment. If symptoms are fully treated with a CPAP machine or other treatment, a veteran would be rated at 0% and not receive compensation; the VA will award progressively higher percentage evaluations based on how symptomatic the condition remains after treatment.

In public comments, DAV stated that the proposed change is a failure to “address the functional impairment caused by sleep apnea” and asserted that the current 50% rating is appropriate.

For tinnitus (ringing in the ears), proposed changes would recognize that symptom as part of a veteran’s broader ailment. The veteran would receive service-connected compensation for tinnitus through the disease to which it is attributed, rather than as a stand-alone disability.

DAV also opposes this change, noting the proposal contradicts a legal precedent decided in 1994 that said veterans are entitled to separate evaluations—and distinct ratings—for conditions that stem from a single disability if they are not duplicative.

“No change to a veteran’s current rating would automatically occur due to these proposed changes,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “When and if the proposed changes are finalized, veterans should seek assistance from a veterans service organization like DAV before filing a claim for increase to determine the impact of the final rules.”



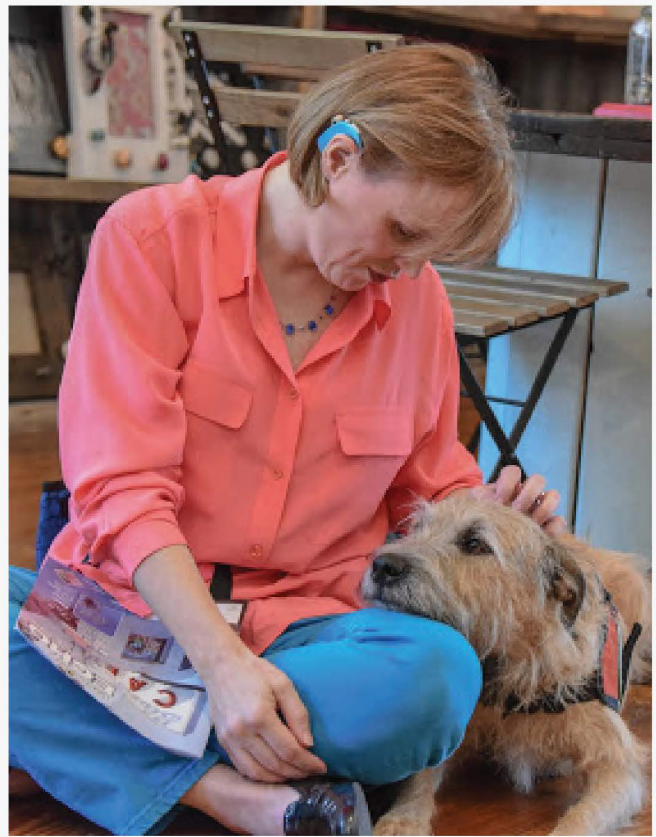
2022 PROSPECTUS

Service Dogs, Inc.

Est. 1988

www.servicedogs.org

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Whether it's for a deaf mother worried about missing her baby's cry, a disabled engineering student with dreams of working at NASA, an abused child struggling to find her voice in court or first responders coping with unrelenting stress, Service Dogs, Inc. serves individual and institutional clients through custom trained Assistance Dogs.

SDI provides all dogs and training **free of charge**.

We continue to offer free, In Person, mental health counseling for military veterans and their families. We practice social distancing guidelines and have hand sanitizer available. We can also help with transportation needs with weekly bus passes.

Charles Jackson MA LPC
Licensed Professional Counselor
Healthy Minds, Healthy Heroes

American GI Forum – National Veterans Outreach Program
210-248-9933 Phone
cjackson@nvop-sa.org
206 San Pedro, Suite 201, San Antonio, TX 78205

San Antonio membership forums will
take place on the 1st Thursday of each
month at 2 pm

February & March Birthdays

Wendi Evans
Silviano Rivera
Brian Pruett
Seth Aho
Luis Lopez
Jose Romero
Robert Bishop
Brandon Cortez
Nakia Merritte
Brandie Peterson
Larry White
John Sanchez
George McEntyre
Edwin Patterson
Chanda Gaeth
Ricardo Laurel
Randi Guerrero
Misael Rodriguez
Kord Beckerdite
Jacqueline Baskett
Michael Sutton
Ronald Rone
Kelly Keyworth
James Byrne
Hector Quinones
Jose Luis Martinez
Fredrick Nash
Barry Coats
Lewis Williams
Franklin Tyler
Regina Escaliente
Benny Reynaga

Richard Vigil
Stuart Parselle
James Poindexter
Raol Salinas
James Rector
Tanoa Leiato
Bob Alan Kafka
Harry Boucher
John Fuller
Billy Easterling
Glenn Welsch
Charles Williams
James Millif
Thomas Taylor
Max Harman
Jose Perez
Josue Lopez
Donald Stepp
Thomas Turner
Jermaine Lewis
Tammy Renfro
James Coleman
Kevin Kuddes
Jason Mead
Leo Andrade
Victor Galan
Clarence Walton

Thomas Slagle
Javier Barraza
Gabriel Diaz De Leon
Kerry Reyna
Raul Ramirez
Alfredo Ramos
Darrell Wilson
Mario Rodriguez
Howard Van Noy
Johnny Treadwell
Ernest Henderson
Albert Ellis
Lorinda Carr
Donald Howard
Alex Williams
Harold Brown
Calvin Lambert
Gregory Rosales
Carlos Ramos-Moll
William Chavez
Steven Hoffman
Sammie King
Tedd Shelton
Marshall Hicks
Ulysses Wicker
Robert Poffinbarger
Hugh Morgan
Jerry Turner
Paul Martinez
Arthur Henderson
Sylvester Barner
Luther Sanders
Paul Stanford
Michael Levine
Joe James



Houston parks and recreation-adaptive division scheduled events

West Gray weekly schedule

Monday

1pm-2pm Bocchia

5pm-7pm developmental wheelchair rugby

7pm-9pm wheelchair basketball

Tuesday

1pm-2pm tabata Tuesday (adaptive fitness)

5pm-6pm beep baseball team fitness

6pm-8pm beep baseball practice

6pm-7pm prep wheelchair basketball skills and drills

7pm-9pm juniors wheelchair basketball

Wednesday

6pm-9pm wheelchair basketball

Thursday

10am-12pm cycling

1pm-2pm dance fitness

5pm-7pm VI fit

7pm-9pm wheelchair rugby

Friday

7pm-9pm wheelchair tennis

6pm-8pm wheelchair lacrosse

Saturday

9am-11am wheelchair rugby

11am-2pm power chair soccer

2pm-4pm deaf basketball

Please see information regarding registration for the 42nd National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Portland, Oregon. Registration will remain open until April 5.

The Online Registration looks different than it has in the past – please don't skip any steps.

Please email any questions or concerns to Nvwgregistration@pva.org.



NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

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July 4–9, 2023 • Portland, OR

Join 500+ Veterans
competing in 22 sports!



WheelchairGames.org
#WheelchairGames

Co-Presented by:





Sports & Recreation

2023 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



PVA Bass Tournament Series

- **Florida Gulf Coast Bass Tournament**,
March 24-26, 2023 | Kissimmee, FL
- **Kentucky-Indiana Bass Tournament**,
April 21-23, 2023 | Kuttawa, KY
- **Bayou Brawl Bass Tournament**,
April 28-30, 2023 | Doyline, LA
- **Southeastern Challenge**,
June 2-4, 2023 | Evans, GA
- **Capital Clash**,
June 9-11, 2023 | Waldorf, MD

PVA Billiards Tournament Series

- **Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament**,
March 17-19, 2023 | Richmond, VA
- **Mid-America Billiards Tournament**,
May 5-6, 2023 | Oklahoma City, OK
- **Buckeye Billiards Tournament**,
June 24-26, 2023 | Columbus, OH

Air Rifle and Pistol Program

- **Wisconsin Air Gun Tournament**,
March 11-12, 2023 | Milwaukee, WI

PVA Bowling Tournament Series

- **Mid-America Bowling Tournament**,
March 31- April 1, 2023 | Oklahoma City, OK
- **Vaughan Bowling Tournament**,
May 5-6, 2023 | Romeoville, IL

PVA National Shooting Sports Circuit

- **Nevada Trapshoot**,
March 31-April 2, 2023 | Las Vegas, Nevada
- **Wisconsin Trapshoot**,
May 19-21, 2023 | Green Bay, WI
- **Vaughan Trapshoot**,
May 26-28, 2023 | Elburn, IL
- **Iowa Trapshoot (Year-End Tournament)**,
June 16-18, 2023 | Cedar Rapids, IA

Boccia

- **Gateway Boccia Tournament**,
March 17-19, 2023 | St. Louis, MO

Handcycling

- **Pocahontas Off-Road Spring Camp**,
April 12-17, 2023 | Chesterfield, VA
- **PVA High Performance Off-Road Camp**,
August 12-21, 2023 | Crested Butte, CO
- **Off-Road Handcycling Championship**,
August 18-20, 2023 | Crested Butte, CO
- **Pocahontas Off-Road Fall Camp**,
September 13-18, 2023 | Chesterfield, VA

Additional Programs

- **Wisconsin Pickleball Camp**,
April 29-30, 2023 | Milwaukee, WI
- **Southeastern Pickleball Camp**,
May 11-12, 2023 | TBD
- **Mountain States Disc Golf Camp**,
June 3-4, 2023 | TBD
- **Mountain States Pickleball Camp**,
August 2023 | TBD
- **Lakeshore Basketball Camp**,
August 28-30, 2023 | Alabama
- **Gateway Disc Golf Camp**,
September 15-16, 2023 | Potosi, MO
- **Rugby Camp**,
September 29-30, 2023 | Phoenix, AZ
- **Great Plains Disc Golf Camp**,
September 23, 2023 | TBD

National Veterans Wheelchair Games

- July 4-9, 2023
Portland, Oregon



The PACT Act Fact Sheet

To ensure Veterans can receive high-quality health care screenings and services related to potential toxic exposures, the PACT Act expands access to VA health care services for Veterans exposed during their military service. For post-9/11 combat Veterans, the bill extends the period of time they have to enroll in VA health care from five to ten years post-discharge. For those combat Veterans who do not fall within that window, the bill also creates a one-year open enrollment period. These expansions mean that more Veterans can enroll in VA health care without having to demonstrate a service connected disability.

The PACT Act codifies VA's new process for evaluating and determining presumption of exposure and service connection for various chronic conditions when the evidence of a military environmental exposure and the associated health risks are strong in the aggregate but hard to prove on an individual basis. PACT requires VA to seek independent evaluation of this process as well as external input on the conditions it will review using this framework. The new process is evidence-based, transparent, and allows VA to make faster policy decisions on crucial exposure issues. This new process has already fundamentally changed how VA makes decisions on environmental exposures and ensures more Veterans have access to the care they need.

The legislation removes the need for certain Veterans and their survivors to prove service connection if they are diagnosed with one of 23 specific conditions. This greatly reduces the amount of paperwork and need for exams that Veterans diagnosed with one of these conditions must complete before being granted access to health care and disability compensation, thereby speeding up their receipt of the benefits they have earned. This list includes 11 respiratory related conditions, along with several forms of cancer, including reproductive cancers, melanoma, pancreatic cancer, kidney cancer, and brain cancers such as glioblastoma. Survivors of Veterans who died due to one of these conditions may now also be eligible for benefits.

To better understand the impact of toxic exposures, the PACT Act requires VA to conduct new studies of Veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War and analyses of post-9/11 Veterans' health trends. The new law also directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to convene a new interagency working group to develop a five-year strategic plan on toxic exposure research.

Ensuring Veterans get the care they need includes ensuring that they are screened for toxic exposure and that VA personnel have the appropriate education and training. The PACT Act requires that Veterans enrolled in VA health care be screened regularly for toxic exposure related concerns. This new law also requires VA to establish an outreach program for Veterans regarding toxic exposure related benefits and supports, and to require additional toxic exposure related education and training for VA personnel.

This bill also delivers critical resources to VA to ensure it can deliver timely access to services and benefits for all Veterans eligible – including those already enrolled. The PACT Act provides VA with mechanisms to enhance claims processing and to increase the workforce. The bill also invests in VA health care facilities by authorizing 31 major medical health clinics and research facilities in 19 states.

Requiring Training for VA and Non-VA Providers: Health care providers and compensation and pension examiners sometimes do not have the training to understand or treat Veterans' exposure concerns. To address this challenge, VA directed compensation and pension providers and Veterans Health Administration clinicians to complete a training module on assessing deployment related to environmental exposures. VA is also encouraging all providers who care for Veterans outside of VA through the Community Care Network contract to complete training on the TRAIN Learning Network, VA's publicly available training site. Furthermore, VA employees and community care providers have been directed to utilize the Exposure Ed App to help providers provide information to Veterans on health effects associated with certain exposures during military service.

Implementing a Network of Specialized Providers and Call Center: Veterans with concerns about the health outcomes of military exposures experience inconsistent care to address these specific issues, especially outside of VA. Earlier this year, VA launched VET-HOME, The Veterans Exposure Team-Health Outcomes of Military Exposures. VA plans to hire health professionals, including physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants who will specialize in conducting patient assessments regarding the health effects of military exposures. By January 2023, VA expects to have a fully operational call center and network of experts to help Veterans concerned about environmental exposure and provide consultative services to Veterans in primary care clinics.

The PACT Act Fact Sheet

What changes will the PACT Act bring?

While some ailments caused by toxic exposure can present quickly, other illnesses can take years to manifest. This left many Veterans outside their eligibility window to enroll in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and others struggling to prove a service connection because of the time that had lapsed. To address this, the PACT Act makes significant changes to the timeline Veterans have to enroll in VA health care. The PACT Act:

Increases the period of time Veterans have to enroll in VA health care from five to 10 years following discharge for post-9/11 combat Veterans.

Establishes a one-year open enrollment period.

Additionally, the legislation codifies VA's new process for evaluating and determining presumption of exposure and service connection — removing the burden of proof from the Veteran.

How do I know if I've been exposed to burn pits?

If you served in any of these locations and time periods, VA has determined you have a presumption of exposure to burn pits or other toxins.

On or after Sept. 11, 2001, in any of these locations:

Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and the airspace above any of these locations.

On or after Aug. 2, 1990, in any of these locations:

Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, The United Arab Emirates, and the airspace above any of these locations

What new presumptive conditions were added for burn pit exposure?

The PACT Act added more than 20 new condition, including a dozen cancers, which are now presumed to be caused by exposure to burn pits and other toxins. This change impacts Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.

Brain cancer, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Glioblastoma, Head cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Lymphatic cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Melanoma, Neck cancer, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type, Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type,

Additionally, these illnesses are also now considered presumptive:

Asthma that was diagnosed after service, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease, Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis, Sarcoidosis

What changes were made for Vietnam-era Veterans?

The PACT Act added two additional Agent Orange presumptive conditions:

High blood pressure (hypertension) and Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS)

Additionally, **five new presumptive locations** were added for Vietnam-era Veterans:

Any U.S. or Royal Thai military base in Thailand from Jan. 9, 1962, through June 30, 1976

The PACT Act Fact Sheet

Laos from Dec. 1, 1965, through Sept. 30, 1969

Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province from April 16, 1969, through April 30, 1969

Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off of Guam or American Samoa from Jan. 9, 1962, through July 30, 1980

Johnston Atoll or on a ship that called at Johnston Atoll from Jan. 1, 1972, through Sept. 30, 1977

What new radiation presumptive locations were added?

VA added three new response efforts to the list of presumptive locations:

Cleanup of **Enewetak Atoll**, from Jan. 1, 1977, through Dec. 31, 1980

Cleanup of the **Air Force B-52** bomber carrying nuclear weapons off the coast of **Palomares, Spain**, from Jan. 17, 1966, through March 31, 1967

Response to the fire onboard an **Air Force B-52** bomber carrying nuclear weapons near **Thule Air Force Base** in Greenland from Jan. 21, 1968, to Sept. 25, 1968

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

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR HEALTH!

- Eliminate sleep deprivation
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- Prevent painful and life-threatening pressure injuries (bed sores)

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The Freedom Bed is the most advanced patient positioning system on the market, providing:

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- ✓ SMOOTH AND SILENT OPERATION
- ✓ UNINTERRUPTED SLEEP



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LATERAL ROTATION



One of our representatives will be pleased to explain the features and benefits of **THE FREEDOM BED**, our value-added programs and services offered.

VA FSS CONTRACT: #36F79720D0184

CALL TOLL FREE: 800.816.8243
EMAIL: INFO@PRO-BED.COM
WEB: WWW.PRO-BED.COM



PRO BED
Medical USA Inc.



Introduction to Adaptive Cycling

April 17-19, 2023

Virtual Education Session
One on One Bike Fittings
Opportunity to Test Ride

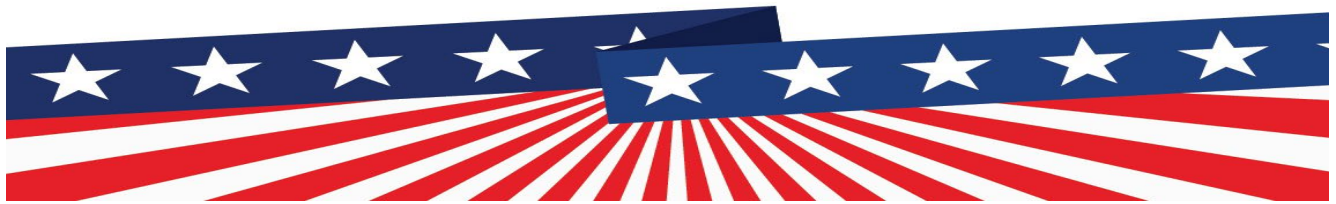
Contact Recreation Therapy Service at (210) 617-5125
or register online: <https://form.jotform.com/210876246319157>



VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
South Texas Veterans Health Care System
Recreation Therapy Service



PUSH YOURSELF!
MAY 4 - 7, 2023

TEXAS
REGIONAL GAMES
SAN ANTONIO

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
THE HARTFORD
INSURANCE

REGISTRATION OPENS
FEBRUARY 1

WWW.TEXASREGIONALGAMES.COM

Texas Regional Games
registration for athletes and volunteers is open. Get
signed up today!



Upcoming events with Texas Regional Para Sport (TRPS)

March 3

Outdoor Fitness Day at Lazy U Ranch in Seguin

This will be a relaxing day at the ranch to enjoy nature and each other as well as archery, boccia, pickleball and yoga.

POC: Jenn jcweatherford10@gmail.com

March 4

Clean Up Day at Lazy U Ranch in Seguin

This is an opportunity to volunteer and give back to this beautiful ranch that we get to enjoy. Tasks will include manual labor such as working on trails, trimming trees and more.

POC: Jenn jcweatherford10@gmail.com

April 15

Outdoor Fitness Day at The Way Ranch in San Marcos

This will be a relaxing day at the ranch to enjoy nature and each other as well as kayaking, fishing, hiking and skeet shooting.

POC: Jenn jcweatherford10@gmail.com

May 4-7

Texas Regional Games in San Antonio

This is a Paralympic style event with competitions, clinics and classification in various sports for people with physical disabilities of all ages and skill levels.

There will be competitions in archery, airguns, boccia, cycling, field, powerlifting, rowing, swimming, tennis, and track.

There will be clinics in archery, airguns, cycling and possibly more.

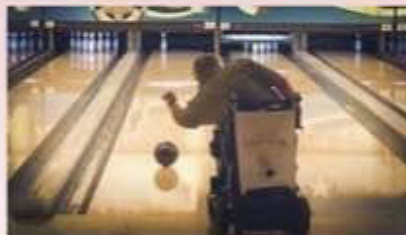


Presents
6th Annual Rolling Inspiration
Bowling Tournament



We are getting together to have an amazing event! And all are welcome!

Oak Hills Bowling Lanes on Saturday, April 8, 2023 with registration beginning at 10:30 AM and the tournament beginning at 11:00 AM. There will be 3 Divisions: Able Bodied, Wheelchair, Wheelchair Ramp with 1st – 3rd Place Medals. Lunch will be provided at the venue.



Sign up before March 15th and guarantee to receive a T-shirt!

Scan code for tickets and donations →



For More Info Call or Email Chris Salas:

210-748-8586 Chris@rolling-inspiration.org

Texas PVA San Antonio Members,

We've been having a delay with wheelchair evaluations here at the San Antonio VAMC. I've address this with the SCI Chief, and we've reached out the PM&R Wheelchair Clinic for assistance on the delay for evaluations. Currently, our veterans are being scheduled 3-4 months for an evaluation once their manual/power chair has been condemned.

We were informed, the wheelchair clinic currently has one APT Therapist addressing all veterans' wheelchair consults, but to notify them if there are any veterans that have any delays.

If there are any delays with wheelchair evaluations, please send me an email and I can address with the SCI Chief and Chief of PM&R (Wheelchair Clinic).

Armando De La Rosa
Central-Central Area Manager
Sr. Benefits Advocate
O: (210) 617-5275
F: (210) 949-9757
E: armandod@pva.org

Please join us at the upcoming Vietnam Veterans Day Recognition Ceremony at the Houston National Cemetary.

March 29, 2023

9:00 am

10410 Veterans Memorial Dr, Houston, TX 77038

ARE YOU A VETERAN WITH A DISABILITY? DO YOU NEED HOME REPAIRS OR



MODIFICATIONS? SBP CAN HELP!



SBP is a disaster recovery organization that is looking for disabled veterans who need repairs or modifications to make their home more accessible.

To be eligible for our services you must meet the following requirements:

- ✓ Have a DD214 or VA Card
- ✓ Income must be at or below 80% AMI
- ✓ Recipients must occupy the home as a primary residence
- ✓ Must not own multiple properties
- ✓ Be within service area
- ✓ Not located in a floodway or the 100 yr floodplain

Services provided:

- ✓ Physical handicap accessibility
- ✓ Roofing, floor, and other health safety home repairs
- ✓ Physical modifications to allow caregivers to live with veterans



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sbpusa.org

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I work for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission as the Director of Veterans Mental Health Services. I oversee a couple of mental health programs for active duty, veterans and their families. We can provide you contact information for these programs, which are statewide and free of charge. The programs are:

The Texas Veterans + Family Alliance (TV+FA) Grant Program

Program improves the quality of life of veterans and their families by expanding the availability of and access to, mental health treatment and services. Grant are awarded to community collaboratives to implement new or existing mental health services and provide linkage to support services that increase response to mental health treatment such as employment services. TV+FA grants support a range of clinical mental health and non-clinical supportive services for veterans and their families that include:

- Evidence-based therapies and treatment;
- Individual, group, and family peer support services;
- Individual and family counseling;
- Treatment of substance use disorders;
- Suicide prevention initiatives to help veterans and their families develop skills in recognizing, assisting, and referring to mental health services; and
- Case-management and referral services.

Mental Health Program for Veterans (MHPV)

Providers deliver peer counseling services to veterans and their immediate family members through contracts with local mental health authorities, and local behavioral health authorities. Individuals enrolled in the program receive peer services from trained and certified peer service coordinators (PSCs) and volunteer peers. Peer services are informal and include: one-on-one peer support, peer support groups, and referrals to health and community-based support organizations at no charge.

PSCs are also trained to identify and engage with veterans who are justice-involved at different entry points into the mental health and criminal justice systems. Additionally, there is also a veterans counselor project in which licensed mental health professionals are trained in military informed care and provide mental health services. This project is implemented at six areas that serve rural communities.

We co-administer the MHPV program with the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC). We can provide contact information for all of these mental health providers and other resources. I've included Dr. Blake Harris on this email, who runs the mental health department at TVC. Please let me know if we can provide this information.



George McEntyre

Director, Veterans Mental Health Services

Office of Mental Health Coordination

8317 Cross Park Dr, Ste 350, Mail Code-1155

Austin, TX 78754 (building # 1410)

Office: (512) 380-4335 | Cell: (512)-660-3136

Email: george.mcentyre@hhs.texas.gov

www.MentalHealthTX.org

Challenged Athletes Foundation Application Is Now Open



CAF ANNUAL GRANT PROGRAM

CAF's flagship grant program aims to remove the barriers that exist between adaptive athletes and their pursuit of sport and fitness.

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals worldwide with permanent physical disabilities are eligible to apply for the CAF grant. Teams, organizations, etc. are not eligible to apply. Hearing impairments, Intellectual and developmental disabilities do not qualify for support through CAF. Medical Verification of Disability is required.

GRANT REQUEST OPTIONS

Applicants may request one of the following grant types:

- Sports Expenses Grant
- Equipment Grant

APPLICATION WINDOW

The 2023 CAF Annual Grant application opens on September 1, 2022. If you are a 2022 CAF grant recipient, [click here](#) for information about grant receipts and FAQs.

2023 ANNUAL GRANT PERIOD TIMELINE

The 2023 CAF Grant Period runs from September 1, 2022 – January 31, 2023

Sept 1, 2022: 2023 Grant application opens

Nov 4, 2022: 2023 Grant Application closes

March 22-31, 2023: Grant Award notifications sent out

March 22, 2023 – May 31, 2023: Grant Award Acceptance & Distribution period

May 31, 2023: Deadline to accept the 2023 grant

January 31st, 2024: 2023 Grant Period closes. Monetary grants must be spent, and receipts uploaded

Veterans Sportsman Challenge



Start time: 9am SHARP

Date: April 15, 2023



Place: Diamond L Ranch
18025 Osburn Rd.
Montgomery, Texas



Turkey Shoot:

Rifle, Pistol, and Shotgun

Clays

Archery

Tomahawk



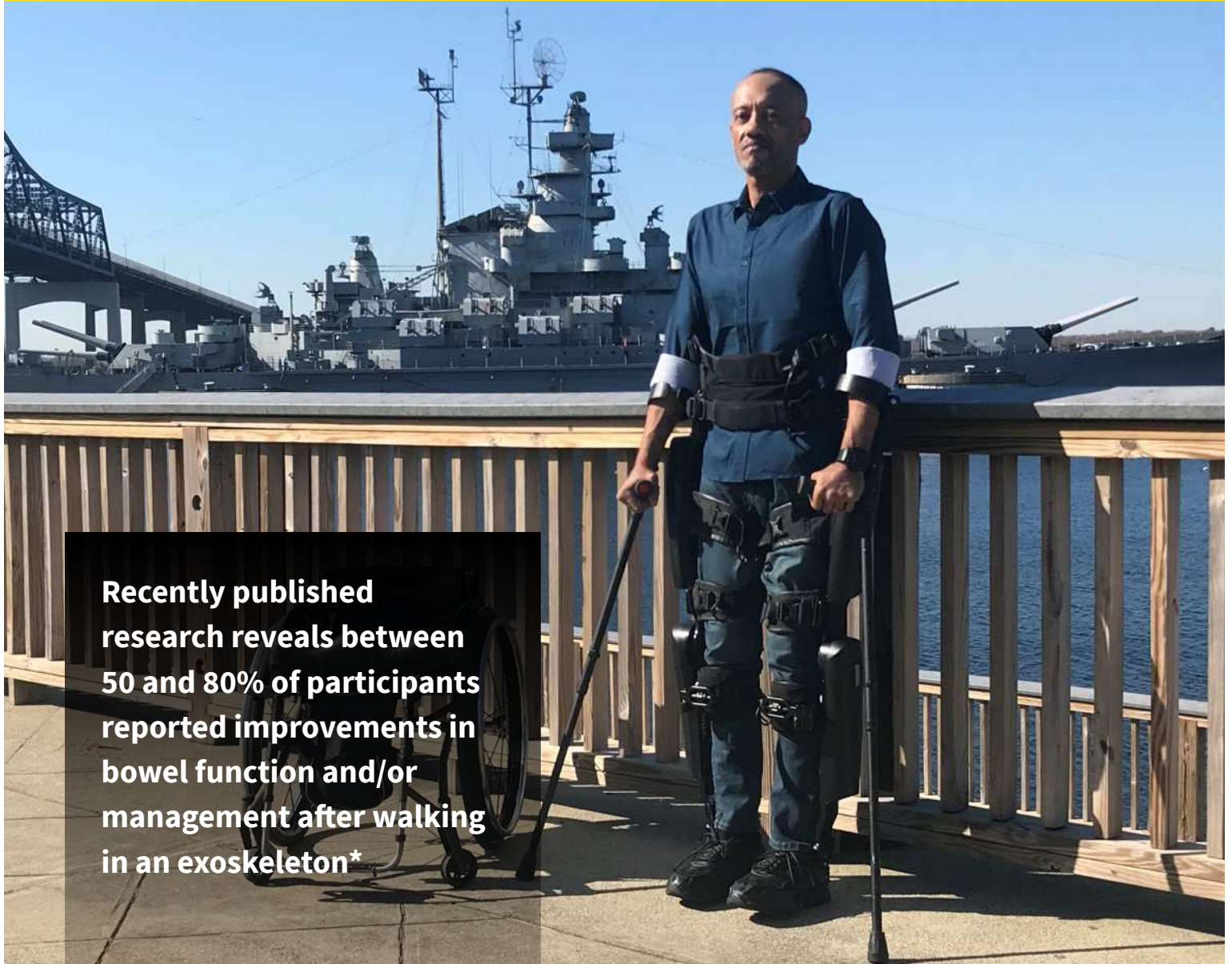
Raffle and Door Prize



Call Ron Lofton for details:

Cell: 936-661-7634

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**

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.org

Steve Holbert 281-359-2909 steveh@texaspva.org

Jason Mead 713-553-4095 offrdcwby@gmail.com

Candice Caesar 832-654-1916 kandikaneruns@gmail.com

We have venison available for members

We have venison available in San Antonio and the Houston area for members. Please call 713-520-8782 or email info@texaspva.org to coordinate a time to pickup.



WE WANT TO INVEST IN YOU!

Supporting Education for our Members and their Families

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NOW ACCEPTING APPLICANTS

Paralyzed Veterans Educational Scholarship Program assists members and their immediate family members by providing scholarship funds to help with a post-secondary education. We will award scholarships in the amount of **\$2,500 to full-time students** and **\$1000 to part-time students** for an academic year.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ARE:

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

pva.org •  ParalyzedVeterans •   PVA1946



Apply Now:

pva.org/scholarship

For More Information, Contact:

Christi Hillman

202.416.7776

ChristiH@pva.org

Application Deadline May 15, 2023.

Previous award recipients may apply.
May only receive the award twice in a lifetime.

FDA Approves Briumvi™ for the Treatment of Relapsing Forms of MS

Latest News December 28, 2022

Reviewed by MSAA Chief Medical Officer Barry A. Hendin, MD

TG Therapeutics has announced that the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Briumvi™ (ublituximab-xiiy) for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS) in adults – including clinically isolated syndrome, relapsing-remitting MS, and active secondary-progressive MS. This medication is a monoclonal antibody that targets CD20, a protein found on the surface of B cells, and induces B-cell depletion within 24 hours. B cells are white blood cells shown to play a role in MS.

Briumvi is given by infusion, with two initial doses administered 14 days apart, followed by infusions every 24 weeks. In studies, Briumvi met its primary end point of reducing annualized relapse rates when compared to individuals taking the oral medication, Aubagio® (teriflunomide). It also met certain secondary endpoints, including the reduction of gadolinium-enhancing lesions as seen on magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), compared to individuals taking Aubagio.

The most common side effect was infusion-related reactions. This new therapy is expected to be available in early 2023.

Study Design and Findings

The Phase III ULTIMATE I and ULTIMATE II trials were identical, double-blind, and double-dummy (placebo) studies taking place at 104 sites throughout 10 countries. Enrolled participants were between the ages of 18 and 55, were diagnosed with relapsing MS, were limited to the use and timing of certain disease-modifying treatments, and had an Expanded Disability Status Scale (EDSS) score of 0 to 5.5 (with greater scores indicating more significant disability).

Between September 2017 and October 2018, the ULTIMATE I trial enrolled 549 individuals and the ULTIMATE II trial enrolled 545. Participants were randomized and the numbers were split in half to receive either Briumvi with an oral placebo or Aubagio with an intravenous placebo. The median follow-up of these studies was 95 weeks (a little less than two years) and some of the results were determined through a pooled analysis of both trials.

Results of these two studies include the following:

In the ULTIMATE I trial, the annualized relapse rate was 0.08 in the Briumvi group versus 0.19 in the Aubagio group. In the ULTIMATE II trial, the annualized relapse rate was 0.09 and 0.18, respectively. Generally speaking, individuals taking Briumvi experienced about half the relapses than those taking Aubagio.

In the ULTIMATE I trial, the mean number of gadolinium-enhancing lesions (per T1-weighted MRI scan) was 0.02 in the Briumvi group versus 0.49 in the Aubagio group. In the ULTIMATE II trial, the mean number of gadolinium-enhancing lesions was 0.01 and 0.25, respectively.

In the ULTIMATE I trial, the mean number of new or enlarging hypointense lesions (per T2-weighted MRI scan) was 0.21 in the Briumvi group versus 2.79 in the Aubagio group. In the ULTIMATE II trial, the mean number of new or enlarging hypointense lesions was 0.28 and 2.83, respectively.

In the ULTIMATE I trial, “no evidence of disease activity” (NEDA) was seen in 44.6% of those treated with Briumvi versus 15.0% of those receiving Aubagio. In the ULTIMATE II trial, NEDA was seen in 43.0% of those treated with Briumvi versus 11.4% of those receiving Aubagio.

Side Effects, Adverse Events, and Screenings Required

Among those taking Briumvi, the most common adverse event was infusion-related reactions (47.7%). Fever, headache, chills, and flu-like symptoms were the most commonly reported symptoms when experiencing an infusion-related reaction. Other side effects included headache (34.3%), nasopharyngitis [cold symptoms] (18.3%), pyrexia [fever] (13.9%), and nausea (10.6%). These were compared to side effects experienced by the Aubagio group, whose most common adverse events included headache (26.6%), nasopharyngitis (17.9%), alopecia [hair loss] (15.3%), infusion-related reactions [to the placebo given intravenously] (12.2%), and diarrhea (10.6%).

Looking at both trials combined, just over half of each treatment group experienced infections – 304 participants or 55.8% of the Briumvi group and 298 or 54.4% of the Aubagio group. Most of these were related to the respiratory tract. Urinary tract infections and herpes virus infections also were seen in smaller percentages of participants.

Serious and life-threatening infections were seen in 5% of study participants taking Briumvi, compared to 3% of those taking Aubagio. Three infection-related deaths occurred with Briumvi-treated patients. Administration of Briumvi should be delayed in patients experiencing active infection.

Also in these trials, one participant taking Briumvi experienced Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) reactivation. All patients should be screened for HBV prior to starting Briumvi and anyone with active HBV should not be given Briumvi.

Although cases of progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy (PML) have been reported in patients taking other anti-CD20 antibodies, no cases of PML occurred during the 96-week period. Additionally, no opportunistic infections were reported.

Results of animal studies suggest that Briumvi may harm the fetus if given to a pregnant woman. For this reason, women who could become pregnant should be given a pregnancy test prior to starting Briumvi as well as prior to each infusion. Effective contraception is recommended during treatment with Briumvi and for six months after discontinuing treatment.

For More Information

For more information, please visit www.briumvi.com, or go to TG Therapeutics' dedicated patient support website at www.briumvipatientsupport.com. This latter website will be available to access within a few days following this approval. Interested individuals may also call 1-833-BRIUMVI, or 1-833-274-8684.

Whether connecting online or via phone, patient support representatives can provide information about financial assistance programs. Representatives can also assist individuals with locating their nearest infusion site. As noted earlier, Briumvi is expected to be available in early 2023.

For general information or to speak with one of MSAAs' trained Client Services Specialists, please contact us in one of the following ways:

Call (800) 532-7667, extension 154 or email MSquestions@mysaa.org. Helpline hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM, Eastern Time. To reach a Spanish-speaking Client Services Specialist, please call (800) 532-7667, extension 131.

Para comunicarse con un Especialista de Servicios al Cliente que habla español, llame al (800) 532-7667, extensión 131 o envíe un correo electrónico a MSquestions@mysaa.org. El horario de la línea de ayuda es de lunes a viernes, de 8:30 AM a 8:00 PM, hora del este.

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Texas Chapter
P.O. Box 989
Crosby, TX 77532

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**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**
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We'll use the proceeds from the sale of your car,
truck, RV or boat to change lives and build brighter
futures for our seriously injured heroes.

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