



Paralyzed Veterans  
of America

# WASHINGTON UPDATE

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

Written and produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America - Government Relations Department

June 30, 2020

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## UPDATE ON PVA'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

PVA continues to be responsive to the needs of our members during the coronavirus pandemic.

On July 9, PVA National will host a webinar for PVA members about career opportunities for PVA members, caregivers, and families during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the country is in an economic recession and grappling with a virus that poses a high-risk for those with spinal cord injuries and related diseases, there are career, educational, and volunteer opportunities available. This webinar, presented by staff from PVA's veteran employment program, PAVE, will provide an overview of career opportunities for those at high-risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. This webinar is targeted toward PVA members, their household members, and caregivers who are seeking employment while reducing their exposure to COVID-19. It will be recorded.

**Topic:** Career Opportunities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**When:** July 9, 2020 2:00-3:00 PM ET

**Register in advance for this webinar:**

[https://pva.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_gnyXtO\\_kSZmp3f\\_AGpA65w](https://pva.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gnyXtO_kSZmp3f_AGpA65w)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

## NEWS ITEMS OF NOTE

- House VA Committee Holds Meeting with VSOs on Pending Legislation

The House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Health met with veterans service organizations on June 18 to discuss our views on S. 785, the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019, and H.R. 5697, the Veterans' ACCESS Act of 2020. These bills include provisions targeted at addressing veteran suicide and improving access to mental health care. PVA's comments on the bills focused on the need to ensure that VA-funded mental health

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programs and services are accessible for veterans with SCI/D and the need for research directed at their needs. Our comments were well received and we are very hopeful that they will be addressed in any finally passed legislation.

- GAO Report on Federal Disability Employment

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has released a [detailed report](#) about efforts to recruit, hire, and retain more employees with disabilities in the federal workforce. The topline numbers are:

- Federal agencies hired about 143,600 persons with disabilities from 2011-2015, plus 79,600 hires in 2016 and 2017.
- About 39 percent of those with disabilities hired in 2011-2017 stayed less than a year, compared to about 43 percent of those without disabilities.
- About 60 percent of hires—both those with and without disabilities—stayed less than two years.

An executive summary of the report is available [here](#).

- Department of Justice Announces Launch of Civil Rights Reporting Portal

The Department of Justice has launched the Civil Rights Reporting Portal. This new online tool will make it easier for the public to report a civil rights violation. The new portal – located at [civilrights.justice.gov](http://civilrights.justice.gov) – will consolidate over 30 unique reporting pathways. The portal is intended to ease the burden on victims of civil rights violations to identify the proper reporting channel. The form is fully accessible to people with disabilities. It is also available in both English and Spanish, with more languages to be added over the next year.

- Reminder: We Need Your ADA Stories!

PVA would like you to share your story about the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on your life or that of your family and friends. To share your story, please visit: [www.PVA.org/ADA](http://www.PVA.org/ADA). At that site, you can also check for information to mark the 30th anniversary of this landmark civil rights law. In addition, you can find more information about how to celebrate the ADA from the [ADA National Network](#), including how you can share what the ADA has meant to you through the #ThanksToTheADA social media campaign.

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- TriWest Community Care Network Region 4 Deployment Schedule

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VA and TriWest, a Community Care Network (CCN) third party administrator, agreed to a 60-day delay for the start of health care delivery in CCN Region 4. TriWest started delivering health care at a few sites in Region 4 (Montana and Eastern Colorado) on June 8. Using a phased approach, TriWest will fully implement in each state throughout the region by late August.

Below is the current deployment schedule for CCN Region 4. Urgent care will also transition across all of CCN Region 4 on August 31 at the conclusion of the deployment period.

Phase I – SHCD	Phase II			Phase III		Phase IV – HCD
6/8/20	7/21/20			8/11/20		8/25/20
VISN 19	VISN 16	VISN 17	VISN 19	VISN 20	VISN 21	VISN 22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montana HCS</li> <li>• Eastern CO</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Houston, TX</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amarillo, TX</li> <li>• West Texas</li> <li>• North Texas</li> <li>• South Texas</li> <li>• Central Texas</li> <li>• Texas Valley Coastal</li> <li>• El Paso, TX</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheyenne, WY</li> <li>• Grand Junction, CO</li> <li>• Salt Lake City, UT</li> <li>• Sheridan, WY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boise, ID</li> <li>• Portland, OR</li> <li>• Roseburg, OR</li> <li>• Puget Sound, WA</li> <li>• Spokane, WA</li> <li>• Walla Walla, WA</li> <li>• White City, OR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresno, CA</li> <li>• Southern Nevada</li> <li>• Northern California</li> <li>• Palo Alto, CA</li> <li>• Reno, NV</li> <li>• San Francisco, CA</li> <li>• Honolulu, HI</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Mexico</li> <li>• Long Beach, CA</li> <li>• Loma Linda, CA</li> <li>• Phoenix, AZ</li> <li>• Northern Arizona</li> <li>• San Diego, CA</li> <li>• Southern Arizona</li> <li>• Greater LA, CA</li> </ul>

\*Subject to change based on VA direction.

## HEARINGS AND SURVEYS

- The House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Health and the Women Veterans Task Force will be holding a [hearing](#) on July 1 at 10:00 a.m. ET on “Veterans’ Access to Reproductive Health.” Maureen Elias, Associate Legislative Director, will be testifying on behalf of PVA.
- On June 23, PVA Government Relations held a webinar for chapters and PVA members with Mr. Jason Latona, Chief of VA’s Specially Adaptive Housing (SAH) Program. In this webinar, Mr. Latona talked about what the SAH program entails, who is eligible and how to apply. He also discussed how the SAH program adapted during the pandemic so it could continue to serve veterans, and how pending legislation may greatly improve the program. To view the webinar, please [click here](#).

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- As we prepare for the 30th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities on July 26, we need your help. Please complete our survey regarding the accessibility experience of people with disabilities who use wheelchairs. The survey link is available [here](#).