

WHEELS IN MOTION

March 2023



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**Paralyzed Veterans of America
Central Florida Chapter
2711 S. Design Ct.
Sanford, FL 32773-8120
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March Board Meeting is a **Zoom/Hybrid** - March 9th 10:30 AM

Website: pvacf.org
Email: office@pvacf.org

Chapter Officers 2021-2023

President..... Steve Kirk
Vice President Roger Sack
Treasurer..... Brian Terwilliger
Secretary Eddie Hawks
National Director Craig Enenbach

Executive Director John DeMauro
Office Manager Joanne Poretti

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Activities Director..... David & Rosa Rountree
Sports Director Roger Sack

National Service Officers:

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Mission Statement

Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida, is a congressionally chartered veteran's service organization that provides a platform of advocacy, education and research, communication, adaptive sports and recreation for veterans paralyzed as a result of spinal cord injury or dysfunction, in an effort to afford them with the highest quality of healthcare and life experiences.

Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida

9th Annual

Jerry Dugan Memorial Charity Golf Tournament

Red Tail Golf Club Sorrento FL

Save The Date

May 6th 2023



Registration 8:00 AM Shot Gun Start 9:00 AM

Registration: \$150.00 per golfer (Veterans \$125) Foursomes: \$540

Cart & Green Fee, Range Balls, unlimited beer, soda and water during play

Goody Bag and Special Gift for each player Hole in One Prizes on all par 3s

Trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams, prizes for closest to the pin and center line, raffle/silent auction

Send check to: PVACF 2711 South Design Court Sanford, FL 32773 or register online at pvacf.org

For more information call 407-328-7041 or email joannep@pvacf.org



Chapter President

Steve Kirk

On The Cover

We at the chapter are blessed with some great volunteers, most have been recruited by our office staff. However, Arian and Luis Rivera showed up at our door and presented themselves as potential volunteers.

They are twin 17-year-old boys who needed some community service hours to satisfy their high school curriculum. As they were introduced to others at the office, I could not help but notice how extremely polite and well-mannered they were. Throughout the past couple of years, these young men have volunteered hundreds of hours at the chapter and at chapter events.

The reason they are featured on the cover of this month's newsletter is because of what they have accomplished so far, and we are expecting great things in the future from them. The staff and Board members, wanted to share this with you, the membership.

Recently it was brought to our attention that Luis's 4.47 GPA earned him the Valedictorian of his class. Adrian was the Salutatorian, with a 4.46 GPA.



Luis has plans to join the Army to be a Combat Medic/Officer. He is currently in the National Guard and does drills on the weekends. He likes hunting, going to the shooting range, and watching Anime.

Adrian is directing his focus on the Air Force and wants to be a pilot. He likes bodybuilding and hunting. He has a bodybuilding show in Altamonte Springs on

June 3rd.

They are the children of proud parents (deservedly so) Jose Rivera and Yelitza Leon.

Steve Kirk



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Executive Director

John DeMauro

By the time, you read this, PVACF Government Relations Director Tim Wolfe and I will have returned from the PVA Advocacy Seminar in Washington, DC. Following the seminar, we spent two days on The Hill, visiting 10 congressional representatives and our 2 state senator's offices to meet with them and/or their Director of Veteran Affairs.

These visits are important to our membership, to disabled veterans and to the general disabled community because every year when a new Congress is sworn in, any bills introduced and not passed in a given year must be reintroduced. Often this requires finding new sponsors and co-sponsors for bills among those in the new Congress. As a result, Tim and I find ourselves appealing to our representatives to sponsor bills they had previously sponsored. This year, five of Florida's elected officials have never served in Congress. During our visit, we introduced PVA and our Chapter to these men and women and explained to them the VA's importance in providing specialized care to veterans with spinal cord injuries or dysfunction. In addition to asking Congress to protect access to the VA's Specialized Health Care Services, we also touched on home- and community-based services and caregiver support. We asked them to pass legislation ending forfeiture of military retirement pay to receive VA disability compensation and to increase

the rate of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) for surviving dependents and lower the eligibility threshold. Finally, we asked them to work on enhancing tax incentives to help businesses comply with their obligations under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), while also investigating more individual ADA complaints.

To read more about these and other issues discussed in these meetings, go to pva.org and look under the Veterans and Disability Advocacy tab; you will also find other information that may interest you there.

Let me remind everyone who is interested in attending the Chapter Board Meetings via Zoom to email me at johnd@pvacf.org so that I can place you on the list of invitees. You must have an invite in order to attend. All Chapter members are welcome to attend the meetings but must be recognized by the chair to speak during the meetings. Comments may always be shared through the chat option.

Also, events and sports calendars can be found on the chapter website at www.pvacf.org. If you see something you want to be involved with or if you have any questions about the calendar, contact Joanne at the office via email at joanne@pvacf.org or call 407-328-7041 and press 3 for her voicemail or 1 for reception.

March is best known for two things: the last day of winter and the first day of spring!

Have a great month!

John DeMauro



(888) 277-1826



NICHOLS

LIFE SAFETY

On National Nonprofit Day, fight for those that fought for you. Our members receive the benefits and services they need when you donate your gently used clothes and household goods. To donate, visit: https://secure.pva.org/default.aspx?tsid=9491&donationAmount=other&mSource=WEQYYDFW2GPG&_ga=2.1705649.1607860698.1552920854-258990882.1542139382

Be kind to humankind! You can #GIVE back to PVA members by donating your gently used clothes and household goods. Your donation can help a paralyzed #veteran today. To learn more and donate: https://secure.pva.org/default.aspx?tsid=9491&donationAmount=other&mSource=WEQYYDFW2GPG&_ga=2.1705649.1607860698.1552920854-258990882.1542139382



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HUMOR

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WAS CALLED
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Government Relations

Tim Wolfe

This month the ACGRD focused on the mobile app that will be coming out for seminar, some of our National Priorities that have received House or Senate numbers, and a big announcement for caregivers.

First up, there will be an email going out this week to those attending this year's Seminar regarding information about the mobile app. On February 14th there will be a Priorities Overview Zoom Meeting at 2:00pm (It will be recorded if you miss it). Finally, on February 21st, all information will be available on the mobile app.

Next, we have received some House Resolutions and Senate numbers for some of our 2023 National Priorities.

- H.R. 542 - the Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act
- H.R. 544 - the Veterans Infertility

Treatment Act has also been reintroduced.

- S. 42, the Build, Utilize, Invest, Learn and Deliver (BUILD) for Veterans Act of 2023. This would reform the way VA manages its medical facilities and infrastructure projects, bolster its workforce, and save taxpayer dollars by disposing of or repurposing buildings that are vacant or unused.
- S. 10, the VA Clinician Appreciation, Recruitment, Education, Expansion, and Retention Support (CAREERS) Act. This would provide the department with more tools to compete for highly qualified medical personnel and support training for current and future VA clinicians to ensure veterans receive the highest quality of care.

The exciting
news that affects

Tim Wolfe



ENTERPRISES, LLC

Sports Director

Roger Sack



Anyone who is interested in applying to attend the National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) are more than welcome to pursue your applications on your own https://wheelchairgames.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/2023_Medical-and-Physical-Form.pdf . For those who are interested in assistance with your medical clearance, please read next steps below:

ACTION ITEMS in chronological order

1. Medical clearance

- a. Medical clearance is available on Thursday 09 March 2023 and Thursday 23 March 2023 – please reply to this e-mail if you would prefer to be seen in the morning or afternoon and on which day.
 - i. If you receive care outside of the VA, please bring with you to this appointment your recent history and physical, diagnosis list, list of all medications, all medical and surgical history.
 - ii. Also, please bring discharge summary for any hospitalizations within the last three (3) years.
- b. Dr. Szczepanik, Sports Medicine Doctor will be completing National Veterans Wheelchair Games medical waivers
- c. Physical Therapists will provide pressure mapping and equipment fitting. Please bring all wheelchair and sports chairs you plan to use during the NVWG.
- d. Adaptive Sports – I will ensure the rest of your application is complete and provide you with all necessary completed paperwork. We can also submit your paperwork at that time.

1. Seeking funding – if you are requesting funding support (airfare & hotel) through the VA Voluntary services and willing to submit a Veteran Athlete profile – please reply back to this e-mail with the following information:

- i. First Name:
- ii. Last Name:
- iii. Branch of Service:
- iv. How many total years did you serve:
- v. What was your highest rank?
- vi. Are you a post 9/11 Veteran
- vii. What is one word to describe you?
- viii. Age:
- ix. Who or what inspires you to be the best version of yourself?
- x. Athletic history:
- xi. What is a fun fact about you?
- xii. What is your t-shirt size?

Please let me know if you have any questions related to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the application process or the clinic itself.



National Service Officer

David Ray

WHEELCHAIR REPAIRS

As SCI veterans we are largely dependent upon our prosthetic equipment to take care of even the most mundane tasks. This is especially true with our wheelchairs. The major problem with being so dependent on our wheelchairs is that if our equipment fails, then we become completely disabled in the purest of sense. Therefore, if we find ourselves facing equipment failure, it is imperative that we get our wheelchair repaired as quickly as possible.

Because SCI veterans are so dependent upon their wheelchairs, they are entitled to a primary wheelchair and a backup wheelchair because of the potential for equipment failure. Therefore, it is in the veterans best interest to discuss obtaining a backup wheelchair with his/her Primary Care Provider (PCP). This backup wheelchair should be of equal quality to your primary chair for those times when the primary chair is being repaired or is otherwise unavailable.

The Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) uses a

Hub and Spoke model to serve our SCI veterans. In Florida there are two Hub facilities. These facilities are located in the cities of Tampa and Miami. There are also six Spoke facilities in Florida which are located in Bay Pines, West Palm, Orlando, Viera, Gainesville and Lake City. Each individual facility processes prosthetic repairs differently. VHA generally requires that everything be initiated by the patient's PCP. In some instances, the veteran can initiate the consult by going directly to the vendor and having the vendor contact the VA Facility, however, that is not the preferred method and if the veteran chooses this method, it may quickly become a very frustrating experience. Both Miami and Tampa are Hub facilities and have wheelchair repair technicians on site, to make it possible for the veteran to go directly to the technicians for any minor repairs. Please keep in mind that these facilities generally prefer for the veteran to use a contracted vendor to complete the repairs and for extensive repairs, the onsite technician at the facility will assign the repair to a vendor.



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Washington Update

BETTER CARE BETTER JOBS ACT INTRODUCED

On January 26, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI) introduced the Better Care Better Jobs Act (S. 100/H.R. 547) to enhance Medicaid funding for home care and strengthen the caregiving workforce through better payment rates and training opportunities. The legislation also supports the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' oversight efforts to aid direct care workers and care recipients. Approximately 18 percent of home care workers live in poverty, many receive few or no benefits, and earn a median wage of \$13 an hour. Such circumstances have caused many home care workers to leave the field, creating a severe shortage of this valuable labor force. Supporters of the measure hope that improved working conditions for direct care workers will help to address that labor shortage and alleviate some of the burden on family caregivers. A description of the legislation can be found [here](#).

SOCIAL SECURITY ENHANCEMENT AND PROTECTION ACT INTRODUCED

On January 31, Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) introduced her Social Security Enhancement and Protection Act (H.R. 671). PVA has endorsed this legislation which would reinstate benefits for students up to age 26 who are children of retired, deceased, or disabled workers, increase benefits for long-time beneficiaries once they reach 20 years after retirement, increase the special minimum benefit, and eliminate the cap on Social Security payroll contributions to generate additional revenue for the Social Security system while at the same time enhancing benefits for those most in need. An analysis of Rep. Moore's bill by Social Security actuaries estimates that its provisions would extend the life of the Social Security trust funds by 24 years to 2059.

HOUSE BILLS ON VA'S EHRM PROJECT

House Republicans recently introduced a pair of bills addressing VA's problematic Electronic Health Record Modernization (EHRM) project. The first bill, introduced by House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVA) Chairman Mike Bost (R-IL), would bar VA from rolling out the new system at additional VA Medical Centers until it demonstrates "significant improvement" and it requires the VA Secretary to certify the systems functionality prior to doing so. It also directs the senior leadership at prospective facilities to certify they are prepared to launch the new program at their site and that it won't have "significant, sustained adverse effects" on patient safety, care quality, or wait times. The second bill, from Representative Matt Rosendale (R-MT), Chairman of the HVA's Subcommittee on Technology Modernization, provides a pathway to scrap the EHRM project altogether if its performance does not improve.

In October 2022, VA announced it was delaying upcoming EHR implementations of its Oracle Cerner system until June 2023 to address system challenges. Lawmakers on both sides of the Hill have made it clear they do not want the project to move forward until it can do so safely and effectively. We expect Congress to hold hearings on its status in the near future.

NEWS OF NOTE

Caregivers Will Receive an Increase in Their Caregiver Stipend Payment

On February 3, the VA Caregiver Program office announced that caregivers enrolled in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers will receive a 4.1 percent increase in their end of February stipend payment. This is the same increase federal employees received on January 1.

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