

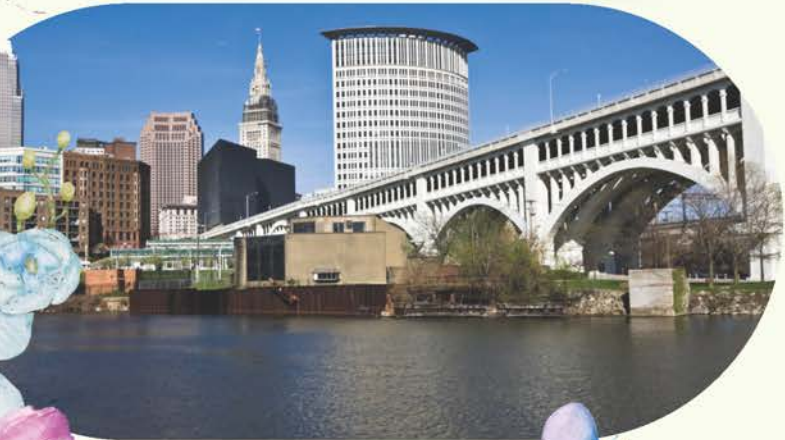
Buckeye Banner

March 2024



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Buckeye Chapter



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Our Mission

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter strives to improve the quality of life of honorably discharged Veterans who have spinal cord injury, dysfunction or illness including but not limited to multiple sclerosis and ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) through advocacy, medical research, sports and recreation, education and communication.

Upcoming Dates

March 17th: St Patrick's Day

March 31st: Easter

April 18-20th: Buckeye Wheelchair Games

May 25th: All You Can Eat Spaghetti Dinner



CHAIN OF COMMAND

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DISCLAIMER

The Buckeye Banner is a publication of the Buckeye Chapter, PVA, and is not meant to inform its readers of Chapter activities, legislation, and other matters of concern to veterans and/or members of the disability community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the BPVA, its Officers, Board Members, the Editor, or production staff.

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA BUCKEYE CHAPTER

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Paralyzed Veterans of
America, Buckeye Chapter



Paralyzed Veterans of
America -- Buckeye Chapter



@PVABuckeye

President's Report

I thought winter might be over, but as I write this, there is snow outside. Guess we can't complain too much about the weather we've had this winter. I hope everyone stayed warm so far.



This is going to be a busy year. So let's get started. First off, this is an election year for the chapter. All nine positions on the board of directors are open this year. Please consider running for office and becoming a board director in the chapter. You must complete a certification request and include another DD 214 to get certified by national. This is a very simple process and we can help you get it done. There is an article in this newsletter that describes everything you need to know. If you should have a question, please contact the office or one of the officers or board members. Remember this is your chapter, why not be a part of it?

Other events being planned for the year are the Buckeye Wheelchair Games at Spire Institute, a pool tournament, spaghetti all-you-can-eat fundraiser, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games being held in New Orleans this year and our annual golf tournament that will be held in September this year. I'm sure this is not all the events, I may have missed a couple, but it shows you the chapter is very active and you can be a part of all this activity and have a good summer. If you have any questions, contact the office or watch the chapter's website for updates.

As always, if you have any suggestions on how we can make a chapter better please contact me through the office, email carlh@buckeyepva.org or 330-603-5363.


Sincerely,

Carl Harris

Carl Harris, President



Government Relations Director's Report



Hello everyone winter is almost over and Easter is right around the corner on March 31st 2024. We continue to advocate for PVA Policy Priorities. One tool that we use to advocate with is PVAction Force I know you may wonder what is PVAction Force. It is a national grassroots advocacy network led by PVA, that actively takes action on vital issues affecting veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders, and diseases like MS and ALS , as well as people with disabilities. It is open to all Americans, and groups, they petition our Congressional leaders on our policy priorities for veterans with disabilities. Got to go till next time stay safe and healthy.

God Bless .

Milton Young

Milton Young/Government Relations Director



Legislation In The 135th Ohio General Assembly

Pertaining to Ohio Veterans, Active Duty, Reserve & National Guard, and Their Families

Ohio House Bills

- HB 18 Allow military license plate applicant present county veterans ID
- HB 33 Establishes operating appropriations for fiscal years 2024-2025
- HB53 Authorize refundable tax credits for hiring certain veterans
- HB 57 Index the homestead exemption to inflation
- HB 60 Increase amount of and expand the homestead exemption
- HB 69 Revise membership of county veterans service commissions
- HB 90 Authorize property tax exemption for disabled veterans, spouses
- HB 123 Designate Honor and Remember flag to honor fallen service members
- HB 126 Expand municipal income tax exemption for military pay
- HB 131 Designate Army SSgt. Charles V. Kettler Memorial Highway
- HB 132 Designate Army Sgt. Herbert C. Linville Memorial Highway
- HB 133 Designate Army Sgt. Ronnie Blair Memorial Highway
- HB 150 Prohibit rental discrimination based on lawful source of income
- HB 202 Designate Specialist Dennis Alan Combs Memorial Highway
- HB 231 Establish 9-8-8 suicide prevention, mental health telephone line
- HB 242 Establish the Armed Forces Reserve Component Scholarship Program and related funds
- HB 250 Revise the Military Enlistment diploma seal
- HB 252 Designate SMI Cornelius Anthony McCaferty, Jr. Memorial Highway
- HB 253 Designate Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor
- HB 254 Expand and enhance the homestead property tax exemption for disabled veterans
- HB 269 Designate Sgt Bradley J. Harper USMC Memorial Highway
- HB 286 Designate Vienna Township Veterans Bridge
- HB 294 Designate Delaware County Veteran's Memorial Highway
- HB 299 Designate Specialist Five Frederick Wayne Taylor Memorial Highway
- HB 310 Regards STRS member purchase of military service credit
- HB 317 Designate Sgt. Cory M. Endlich Corridor
- HB 335 Designate Ottawa County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 350 Designate Lance Corporal Austin B. Schwenk Memorial Highway
- HB 355 Designate Licking County Veterans Memorial Highway
- HB 365 Designate multiple memorial highways
- HB 378 Permit homestead exemption-surviving spouses of service members
- HR 95 Urge Congress to extend GI Bill benefits
- HR 189 Honoring Thomas Mihalis Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 on its Centennial
- HR 221 Honoring Dan Shroyer as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- HR 222 Honoring Dr. John Eichelberger as a 2023 National Veterans Golden Age Games Champion
- HR 258 Honoring American Legion DeWitt McConnell Post 235 on its Centennial
- HR 302 Honoring Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1090 on its Centennial



HR 316 Honoring Jay Wilson American Legion Post 112 on its Centennial
 HCR 8 To urge the federal government to select Ohio for the permanent headquarters of the United States Space Command
 HCR 9 Adopt Restoration of America's Readiness (ROAR) Resolution

Ohio Senate Bills

SB 12 Regards veteran-owned business enterprise certification program
 SB 14 Expand veteran eligibility to teach without license
 SB 15 Authorize Military License Plate Program permanent registration
 SB 43 Modify homestead exemption-surviving spouse of a disabled veteran
 SB 45 Designate Veterans Memorial Bridge in Trumbull County
 SB 63 Require plaintiff in asbestos claim to file specified disclosures
 SB 64 Expand Ohio National Guard Scholarship Program
 SB 110 Designate Sgt. Anthony Kress Vinnedge Memorial Highway
 SB 113 Regards failure to comply with Military Selective Service System
 SB 114 Designate Lance Corporal James F. Kimple Memorial Highway
 SB 152 Designate Cpl. Jack O. McClure Memorial Highway
 SB 154 Include Space Force in armed forces, armed and uniformed service
 SB 167 Designate Marine Corporal Tim W. Russell Highway
 SB 169 Designate Cortland Veterans Memorial Bridge
 SB 183 Designate Lance Corporal James Patrick Rizzo Memorial Highway
 SB 191 Designate PFC Richard 'Rick' Wesley McFarland Memorial Highway
 SB 208 To require a military exception in an open enrollment policy
 SR 171 Honoring Thomas Mihalys Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1079 as it commemorates its One Hundredth Anniversary
 SR 262 In memory of Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson
 SCR 8 Urge federal govt reduce processing time- veteran disability claim
 SCR 9 Urge Congress support military, veteran mental health treatment

Are you interested in keeping up with proposed Legislation in Ohio? See below how to sign up for the Ohio Legislative Report.

Is published electronically at the start of each month to report on the latest information about legislative issues taking place in Columbus that could affect the lives of Veterans, Military Personnel, and their families in Ohio.

It is emailed at no charge to all who would like to receive it.
 To subscribe, send your name and email address to:
oh.leg.report@gmail.com
 Editor: David K. Root



GI Bill Single Payment Account

Joshua Jacobs, the Under Secretary for Benefits, just introduced us to a change regarding benefit payments. Starting April 20, 2024, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will no longer send a veteran or family members' benefit payments to more than one bank account. The VA is making this change to help protect veterans and families from fraud and ensure that VA is able to pay veterans on time, without error.

This will require all veterans and beneficiaries who receive GI Bill payments and other benefit payments across multiple banking accounts to select one account by April 20, 2024.

This shift is happening as a part of VA's efforts to modernize the 50-year-old, antiquated GI Bill payment system. Once fully deployed, the platform will improve claims processing and customer service by providing direct, online access to GI Bill benefits and information.

VA will be reaching out to these students via all means necessary on a weekly basis through April 20. VA is also working with schools, Veterans Service Organizations, and other relevant parties to make sure veterans meet the deadline.

The easiest way for beneficiaries to make this change is to log on to <https://www.va.gov/change-direct-deposit/>. When they get to the pay information, there will be a box for the bank account information of their education benefit, and a box for the bank account information for the other benefit they receive. The beneficiary should then update the bank account information to use the same account for all benefits.

Importantly, no veteran will miss a benefit payment of any type. For any students who do not consolidate their bank accounts for benefits by April 20, VA will consolidate them on their behalf, electing their non-education benefit pay account as their primary bank account.

For any additional questions pertaining to this change, please contact your local PVA Service Officer.



The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international non-profit organization uniting fraternally in the spirit of liberty, truth, justice, and equality, to make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope.



The F.O.E. donates more than \$10 million a year to local communities, fundraisers, charities and more. As part of its philosophy, the F.O.E. gives back 100 percent of monies raised in the form of grants. Fundraisers are conducted for eight major charities, including kidney, heart, diabetes, cancer and spinal cord injury funds, a children's fund, memorial foundation and the Golden Eagle Fund.

Call Us
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About George Music Company

Welcome to Akron's finest entertainment company. We are a locally owned family operated company serving the Northeast Ohio area since 1933. We offer the absolute finest, most up-to-date equipment available along with providing a strong dedication to the success of our customers. Our State of the art entertainment solutions are specifically tailored to meet our customers' individual needs.



George Music Company provides the latest in digital internet jukeboxes, NGX Jukeboxes, Touch Tunes Jukeboxes, skill games and amusement machines to bars, taverns, pubs, restaurants, bowling alleys, universities, and social clubs. We install and service Internet Jukeboxes in Bars, Taverns, Fraternal Organizations, anywhere. Delivery and setup is also available (call for details). George Music Company only provides service on what we sell. We also sell used coin-operated machines for the home.

As you can see, we are the premier amusement supplier in the Akron and surrounding area. To increase revenue and keep your customers entertained and satisfied, call George Music Company and find out how you can add excellent entertainment equipment to your establishment.

Call (330) 923-9868 or
 toll free at 1-800-492-9507

Getting Veterans with SCI Back on Their Feet

Eligible veterans may receive an Ekso Indego exoskeleton at NO COST!

What is Ekso Indego?

A powered exoskeleton that enables individuals with spinal cord injuries (T3-L5)* to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.

- Walk at home and in your community
- Improve your cardio and bone density
- Enjoy eye-level conversations again

VA policy allows Ekso Indego to be issued at no cost for those who qualify.

How to Get Qualified

Contact us to find out if you may be eligible. An evaluation by your provider at a SCI/D center is required to determine eligibility for use of an Ekso Indego Personal device.

*For full indications for use, visit: www.eksobionics.com/indications-for-use/



You Shop. Your charity gets money. iGive automatically helps your favorite cause, every time you shop. It's free to sign up. Sign up today and make BPVA your charity!



iGive.com



Hello members! I just wanted to take a minute to update everyone on the status of the MS Committee. Currently at the chapter, we are working with the National MS Society in order to participate in future MS Walks or MS Runs. These events take place in several locations across the state but we are hoping to start on a small scale in Cleveland, whether it be just sending a team of a few veterans to participate in the one or three mile walk, or even have a table set up to spread information about PVA and our MS specific programming.

The National MS society has also been generous enough to give us Veteran Specific resources.

From the Ms. For vets podcast, which has substantial amounts of information for veterans in our situation, to the societies YouTube channel which even has a monthly video series dedicated specifically to veterans, there are a ton of different ways to get information. I encourage you to check out the national Ms. Societies website, as well as reach out to the coordinators if you have any questions and are looking for resources.

If you are interested in volunteering with the chapter , or participating in MS Events in the future, I encourage you to reach out to either myself or the office and show interest.If you have any ideas for future events , or thoughts on how to better serve our MS community in the chapter,please feel free to reach out to the chapter or myself at anytime!

Regards,

Josh Maley

Josh Maley, MS Committee POC



Rugby Tournament

By: Paul Mann

Hello BPVA members, I hope you all had great holidays. I recently played at the PVA's wheelchair rugby tournament. Being held in Louisville, Kentucky this year. The Militia arrived at various times early on Thursday so that we could play in a all veterans game to kick off the tournament. All of the players stayed at the Omni hotel downtown Louisville. A beautiful hotel that some of the veterans stayed when the National Veterans Wheelchair games were in Louisville couple years ago. A hotel with its own shops, several restaurants, several large lounging areas, and a club with a bowling alley. We won both of our games Friday and had a team dinner in one of the restaurants in the hotel. Followed by a couple of competitive table shuffleboard games. Saturday we won both games as well, leaving us 4-0 for the tournament. And playing the team sponsored by the University of Michigan Sunday. We played well Sunday, but lost. So we took second in our division of six teams. It was a great tournament. The experience of playing in the tournament, and the time with my OM family. Four days, six games kept us busy. After I packed up after the tournament. And took the scenic drive thru the Kentucky countryside home to my dog. I hope you're staying warm.



Thank you,

Paul Mann

Paul Mann, Board Member and Co Sports Director





Hello Buckeye PVA members, it's starting to warm up outside. Time to start thinking about getting out, and enjoying sports and recreation. BPVA is in full swing preparing for the BWG coming up the 19th and 20 of April. If you haven't gotten your applications in, please do they are due in by March 22nd. So we can complete all of the details and preparation. We're excited to bring back Disc golf and introduce Pickleball to this years games. Myself and the other board members are looking to see you all participating.

There was a wheelchair rugby tournament in Akron last week. We had members there as athletes and spectators. Fun to watch if you want to attend one next season locally. We have some other sporting events coming up from the PVA. We have the BPVA Billiards tournament coming soon. We will keep you posted when the details are worked out. It will most likely moving from the Columbus area, back towards Cleveland this year.

National PVA has several events coming up including a billiards tournament in Midlothian, VA March 15th-17th. They also have the Bluegrass Bass Bash tournament in Kuttawa, KY April 19-21. The same weekend as the BWG games unfortunately. There is a PVA paracycling race in Chesterfield, VA on the 10th-14th of April. Which will feature a road and off-road race.



We are having a fundraiser at the Play It Again Sports store in Cuyahoga Falls. 10% of all disc golf sales will go to BPVA for the BWG. There will be no online sales, but if you call in they can take a purchase that away. And a reminder that applications for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in New Orleans are due by April 5. That is all I have for this report. But I look forward to seeing you all soon at the Spire for the BWG.

Thank you,

Paul Mann

Paul Mann, Board Member and Co Sports Director



2024 Buckeye PVA Chapter Elections

CHAPTER ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP!

Elections for the Board of Directors (BOD) of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter (Buckeye PVA) will be held this year. All nine positions are open for election. Any member in good standing may run for office, but you must be certified before appearing on the ballot. Certification is simple and mainly requires submitting your DD 214 to National PVA. Contact Carl Harris (carlh@buckeyepva.org) for assistance.

Nominations are being accepted by mail or email this year. If you are interested in helping the Chapter continue to improve our services to SCI/SCD veterans, please consider entering your name into the nomination by notifying the office and submitting a brief biography (300 words or less). We have members all over Ohio, and your bio will help them learn something about you before voting. Bios can be submitted to the Chapter Office at 2775 Bishop Road, Suite B, Willoughby Hills, OH 44092, or to Sarah Hoffman at sarahh@buckeyepva.org.

Being on the BOD at Buckeye PVA is a volunteer position. A board member may be reimbursed for adequately approved travel and expenses. There are generally 12 meetings per year, and all members are expected to attend each meeting. Some of these meetings may be attended by video or teleconference if you live outside the Cleveland area. As needs arise, you will also be asked to work on various committees and chapter functions. Access to an internet-enabled computer is required in that the board does much of its communication by email. A buckeyepva.org email account will be provided to each board member. Contact any current officer or member of the board if you have questions concerning board responsibilities.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- **June 3, 2024** – Nominations Open to Membership.
- **July 8, 2024** – Deadline for submitting nominations & biographies.
 - **July 15, 2024** – Ballots will be sent out.
 - **August 12, 2024** – Ballot return deadline.
- **August 30, 2024** – Special General Membership Meeting to announce results.
- **September 18, 2024** – BOD Meeting with old and new BOD members.
- **October 1, 2024** — New Board takes over.

If you have any questions, please contact the Chapter office at 216-731-1017.



The Military Injury Relief Fund grants a tax-exempt monetary payment to military service members injured in a combat action as a member of the Armed Forces of the United States serving after October 7, 2001, and to individuals diagnosed with post-traumatic stress related to a combat action while serving after October 7, 2001.

Please contact the MIRF Program at (877) 644-6838, opt. 3 with any other questions not addressed below.

How do I apply for a MIRF grant?

[Complete our application.](#)

Please fill out all fields on page 1 and refer to page 2 for documentation requirements, or see our downloadable [brochure](#). You may also pick up an application at your [County Veterans Service Office](#).

Can I apply more than once for a MIRF grant?

Yes! Per a change to the parameters on the program outlined in the [Ohio Administrative Code](#) that was approved Feb. 28, 2023, eligible veterans can apply up to three times for this compensation.



Caregivers



Elizabeth Dole Foundation

CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Greetings,

Time flies! It's amazing how fast the days are going by. There's so much to do, and so little time to manage it all. With all we have going on in our lives, the thought of addressing our financial health can be daunting; however, most of our needs and wants are centered around our financial well-being. Caregivers are not exempt from financial challenges; AARP's research revealed that the average caregiver spends nearly \$8,000 out of pocket per year on expenses related to caregiving. Additionally, the USDA's 2023 data reveals that the average Ohio household of four spent \$973 monthly for groceries, and even more is spent on medical co-pays, medicine, and utilities. Certainly, each of us has dealt with the unfortunate task of trying to stretch each dollar to make it from one pay date to the next as the cost of living has risen. As the tax season is upon us, it is a reminder of how well we are managing our finances and finding out if there are obstacles that are preventing us from providing for our families.

Financial resilience is the ability to cope with life-altering events such as an extended period of illness, disability, unemployment, or other situations that can make or break the family budget. Those who are not able to bounce back from the aftermath of such challenges are left in a vulnerable state, and being financially vulnerable can negatively impact their lives and their livelihood. Your service to your veteran is valued-- many organizations respect the sacrifices made by veterans and caregivers, realizing the burden some households endure. There are resources available to give insight and hope to those needing financial assistance and support.

As a supporter and advocate, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation (EDF) assists caregivers who are burdened with hardships such as financial insecurity, unemployment, healthcare expenses, and the accelerated cost of living. These factors are considered, and those who qualify and are experiencing acute situations will be assisted with support, referrals, and access to the holistic financial wellness program offered by EDF. More information is available at hiddenheroes.org.

Furthermore, AARP recognizes the sacrifices made by caregivers. They partner with EDF and many organizations and groups that provide access to information to assist those who need advice, guidance, and support. The list provided in the AARP Financial Workbook for Veterans and Military Families includes the following resources:

AARP Caregiving Resource Center- www.aarp.org/caregiving or 877-333-5885

**American Red Cross- redcross.org/get-help/military-families/financial-assistance.html
877-272-7337**

Amvets Healing Heroes- amvetsnsf.org/healing-heroes 877-726-8387



Caregivers cont.

Code of Support Foundation- codeofsupport.org 571-418-6339

**Disabled American Veterans & Auxiliary dav.org/veterans/resources/auxiliary.dav.org
888-604-0234**

Hope For the Warriors- hopeforthewarriors.org 703-658-3985

National Association of Minority Veterans- namvetsamerica.org 866-626-8387

National Military Family Association- militaryfamily.org 800-260-0218

Nine Line Foundation- ninelinefoundation.org 203-470-5203

Operation First Response- operationfirstresponse.org/assistance-request 888-289-0280

Operation Second Chance- operationsecondchance.org/support-and-assistance 301-972-1080

Paralyzed Veterans of America caregiver Support- pva.org/find-support/caregiver-support

Pended Foundation- penfedfoundation.org 800-558-9224

**Quality of Life Foundation Wounded Veteran Family Care-
woundedveteranfamilycare.org/assistance 855-765-7650**

Simper Fi Fund- semperfifund.org/get-assistance 760-725-3680

Soldier's Wish- soldierswish.org 877-631-8300

U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs Caregiver Support- www.caregiver.va.gov 855-260-3274

Volunteers of America Supportive Services for Veteran Families- voa.org/supportive-services-for-veteran-families 844-486-2838

**Veterans of Foreign Wars Unmet Need and Auxiliary Veteran Family Support-
vow.org/assistance/financial-grants vfwauxiliary.org/what-we-do/veteran-family-support 866-789-6333**

Vietnam Veteran of America & Associates Helping Hands Grants- via.org Ava.org/hhgrant.html 800-882-1316

Wounded Warrior Project Resource Center- woundedwarriorproject.org/programs/wwp-resource-center 888-997-2586

These organizations and groups are willing to bear the financial burdens many caregivers are facing. Be encouraged, we are all in this together, and together we stand as we seek to find financial freedom, more peace, and less stress in our lives.

Be well,

Jeanette Ezell

Jeanette Ezell
Ohio Dole Caregiver Fellow

Enhanced Accessibility



Chaparral Prairie

Building trails FOR ALL VISITORS

Making Ohio's state nature preserves accessible to all visitors has been a driving factor in recent facility improvements. Paved and easy-to-access boardwalk trails make it possible for everyone to navigate the natural landscape in every season.



Chaparral Prairie

In 2023, the division installed new accessible trails at Chaparral Prairie and Stage's Pond state nature preserves. Whether our visitors are walking or rolling, a variety of habitats are theirs to discover.

Wander Through Striking Summer Blooms

Visitors to Chaparral Prairie in Adams County can now easily access nearly 2,500 feet of concrete trail from the paved parking lot. The new trail winds along a ridge and around a prairie meadow which comes alive in summer. The prairie offers close views of the beautiful dense blazing-star and numerous rattlesnake-master flowers, a rare, yucca-like prairie plant.

Looking across one of Chaparral's main prairie areas in the preserve, visitors will quickly notice the extensive diversity and density of prairie plants found in the preserve including prairie dock, whorled rosinweed, prairie false indigo, and other unique plants which can be easily identified from the new trail.

The project also included installing a 10 x 12 foot observation deck for viewing the birds and bugs fluttering across Chaparral Prairie's meadows. For visitors who wish to admire the natural sights, a bench with a small roof provides a shady respite from the sun.

Fascinating Habitats Surround Visitors

The only state nature preserve in Pickaway County, Stage's Pond offers 178 acres of ancient glacial ponds, prairie meadows, and old growth forest. Each of these habitats offer its own assemblage of plants and animals. The preserve is a must-see for all nature enthusiasts.



Early vegetation growth at Stage's Pond



White Oak

In late summer, the preserve's Meadow and Boundary trails were paved and a new boardwalk-style trail, the White Oak, was installed for a total of 1.8 miles of accessible trail. The Boundary and White Oak loop trails, beautiful in the spring when the preserve bursts with spring wildflowers and bird song, offer nearly 2,000 ft. of paved concrete and more than 4,000 ft. of winding boardwalk, which also makes it easier to traverse in wet conditions.

Visitors using the Boundary Trail will see huge burr, white, and red oaks along with massive walnuts, hickories, honey locusts, and cottonwoods. Birding enthusiasts will enjoy how easy it is to follow the Meadow Trail to a large blind offering great views of waterfowl on the smaller of two ponds.



Fowler's Sillite

Nature Discovery Supported By Fellow Ohioans

What is unique to each of these trail projects is that none of the trail improvements were funded by Ohio taxpayer dollars. Instead, the division was able to use donations to Ohio's income tax checkoff fund for the 50% match needed to secure federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grants for each trail project. Donations also helped pay for the new interpretive signs at each site.



Stage's Pond trail dedication

Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

Eligibility Criteria Fact Sheet



The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) offers enhanced clinical support for Family Caregivers of eligible Veterans.



Veteran Eligibility Requirements:

A Veteran or Service member may be eligible for a Family Caregiver if all of the following requirements are met:

- 1 The individual is either:
 - A Veteran; or
 - A member of the Armed Forces undergoing a medical discharge from the Armed Forces.
- 2 The individual has a serious injury (including serious illness) incurred or aggravated in the line of duty in the active military, naval, or air service.
 - For purposes of PCAFC, serious injury means any service-connected disability that: (1) Is rated at 70 percent or more by VA; or (2) Is combined with any other service-connected disability or disabilities, and a combined rating of 70 percent or more is assigned by VA.
- 3 The individual is in need of in-person personal care services for a minimum of six (6) continuous months based on any one of the following:
 - An inability to perform an activity of daily living;
 - A need for supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury; or
 - A need for regular or extensive instruction or supervision without which the ability of the Veteran to function in daily life would be seriously impaired.
- 4 It is in the best interest of the individual to participate in the program.
- 5 Personal care services that would be provided by the Family Caregiver will not be simultaneously and regularly provided by or through another individual or entity.
- 6 The individual receives care at home or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.
- 7 The individual receives ongoing care from a Primary Care Team or will do so if VA designates a Family Caregiver.



To apply online, visit

<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers>

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs



Family Caregiver Eligibility Requirements

A Family Caregiver must:

- 1 Be at least 18 years of age.
- 2 Be either:
 - The eligible Veteran's spouse, son, daughter, parent, stepfamily member, or extended family member; or
 - Someone who lives with the eligible Veteran full-time or will do so if designated as a Family Caregiver.
- 3 Be initially assessed by VA as being able to complete caregiver education and training.
- 4 Complete caregiver training and demonstrate the ability to carry out the specific personal care services, core competencies, and additional care requirements.

In addition, there must be no determination by VA of abuse or neglect of the eligible Veteran by the caregiver.



Stipend Levels:

The amount of the monthly stipend the Primary Family Caregiver is eligible to receive, is determined based on information gathered during VA's evaluation of the Veteran's personal care needs.

Level One: The Primary Family Caregiver's monthly stipend is calculated by multiplying the monthly stipend rate [Office of Personnel Management (OPM) General Schedule (GS) Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides] divided by 12 multiplied by 0.625.

- For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1, in Dallas, Texas, for 2022 was \$34,916 annually.
- Thus, the monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas, at this rate (\$34,916, divided by 12 multiplied by 0.625) was approximately \$1,818.54 in 2022.

Level Two: If VA determines the eligible Veteran meets the definition of "unable to self-sustain in the community" for the purposes of PCAFC, the designated Primary Family Caregiver's monthly stipend is calculated by multiplying the monthly stipend rate (OPM GS Annual Rate for grade 4, step 1, based on the locality pay area in which the eligible Veteran resides) divided by 12 multiplied by 1.00.

- For example, the GS rate at grade 4, step 1, in Dallas, Texas, for 2022 was \$34,916 annually.
- The 2022 monthly stipend amount for a Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran in Dallas, Texas, at this rate (\$34,916, divided by 12 multiplied by 1.00) was approximately \$2,909.67

Veterans and caregivers can find their local CSP Team by:



Calling the VA Caregiver Support Line **1-855-260-3274**
(Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET; Saturday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 pm ET) Toll free



Using the CSP Teams locator at
www.caregiver.va.gov/support/New_CSC_Page.asp

To apply online, visit

<https://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers>



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Members Corner

Jennifer Steele

I'm Jennifer Steele and I'm a US Army veteran. I served as a 14T PATRIOT Missile Launcher Operator/Maintainer. I was part of Bravo 5-52 Air Defense Artillery out of Fort Bliss, TX. Our unit deployed to Iraq in February 2003 in support of Operation



Iraqi Freedom. Shortly after returning, I began having neurological issues that ended up being Multiple Sclerosis. I was devastated that my military career was ending only four years into my enlistment. Over time, I progressed into needing to use a wheelchair daily. I fought it for a long time, convinced that being in a chair would be the end of being able to do the things I used to love. My SCI nurse tried for several years to get me involved with PVA and the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, and I finally agreed. It has become the thing I most look forward to every year!

The people I've met have become like family, and we all understand the struggles we go through with our disabilities. I have learned that my wheelchair isn't a prison, it's my freedom. I played softball for the first time in 18 years at my first Wheelchair Games, and I wouldn't be where I am now without PVA and the amazing resources it has provided to me.

Members Birthdays

March

Michael Stutler Karla McKinney
 Donald Blawkenship **David North** Jerome Lee
Frank Helenberger Robert Duddleston **Patrick Griffis**
 Christopher Powers **Kevin Pullen** Peter Murphy **Jazmine Elahee**
Clarence Johnson Bernard Pugh **Gregory Baugh** Dwayne Ezell
 Ralph Wischer **Robert Brown** Robert Wright **Randal Walker** John Brooks
Paul Ladikos Jerome Casey **Bernard Smith** James Dunbar **Robert Dilallo**
 Michael Shaw Scott Currie James Trzop David Conner Cristy Bostic
 Stephen Landfried **Jeffery Fisher** Karen Bond **Michael Murphy**
Harold Wheeler Jay Hefferon **Michael Winstead**
 Terry Dear

April

Jacob Davis **James Kranak**
Christopher Wynn Douglas Sullivan
 Michael Weinman **Jason Broz** Ben Kilar **Adam Harmon**
 Jean Reynolds **Roger Linder** Clifford Medred **Leo Kelly**
 Christina Stewart **Brent Persinger** George Iwaniok **Joseph Gibson**
Kenneth McDowell Herbert McKinley **Ronnie Tucker** Annette Harris
 Darrel McCauley **Curtis Pender** Richard Bell **Mark Brozak** Chauncey Downs
Sherman Hartley Cory Anderson **Marvin Dryer** Armone Moore
 Richard Tuttle **Kim Caswell** Richard Sesso **Joshua Davis**
Bernard Wegford Robert Hyatt **Dennis Goens**
 Brandon Starkey **Robb Goe**

May

Scott Law La Vonn Scott **John Wright**
 John Rothermel **Fred Layfield** James Hard **John Suru**
 Marie Ann Bohusch **Charles Schretzman** Mark Dunford
Jerome Perry Phillip Osborn **Thurman Trowbridge** Willie Gray
David Lowe Diego Lugo **James Michael** John Schmoll **Mark Hasson**
Murl Muenchau Robert Bernlandt **Jacqueline Tyler** **Samuel Zachariah**
 Teresa Cahill **Angela McBride** Douglas Mcpherson **Dean Byers** Marc Boyes
 Andrew Adams **Molly Higham** Paul Lanier **Curtis Fatyol** Paul Singer
Ronald Kohus David Jacobsen **Michael Wood** David Hudson
Bryant Delaney Nathan Collins **Jared McClung**
Gearry Burke Larry Engle **Michael Dexter**
 David Shellabarger **George Pasipanki**
Jacob Bernecker **Thomas Durbin**



Issue 2 • Volume 32

January 30, 2024

Washington Update

Check out the [PVAAction Force](#) page to view alerts and a list of key legislation.

HVAC HOLDS HEARING ON RURAL VETERANS

On January 11, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a full committee hearing on rural veterans. During the hearing, committee members grilled VA about benefits and services available for rural veterans. Testifying on behalf of VA was Dr. Shereef Elnahal, Under Secretary for Health; Joshua Jacobs, Under Secretary for Benefits; and John Boerstler, Chief of the Veteran Experience Office. Joining them on the first panel was Alyssa Hundrup, Director of Health Care, Government Accountability Office.

Several members of the committee represent rural districts and it was clear in the questions presented to the witnesses that the topic of the hearing was personal for them and their constituents. In particular, several of the committee members highlighted the need to improve access to health care on tribal lands. It is often extremely difficult to access health care on these lands.

At the beginning of his questioning, HVAC Chairman Mike Bost (R-IL) asked Dr. Elnahal if the increased budget to the Office of Rural Health was showing tangible improvements for rural veterans. Dr. Elnahal explained that the office funds research and operational initiatives that help VA extend care to rural veterans, as well as coordinate where the funding goes. It also ensures that deficiencies in care are addressed by VA, so no veteran is left behind.

Another popular topic was a recent pilot program that created women's health "mini-residencies." VA has held more than 200 events and trained more than 500 doctors as a refresher course for gender-specific care for women veterans.

Based on the hearing, it appears that the Office of Rural Health is working hard to meet veterans where they are, trying to make appointments more convenient for rural veterans, and making sure the standard of care offered throughout the VA is meeting the needs of rural veterans across the country. The VA knows, however, that there is still more work to do but they are being pragmatic about the solutions they propose. The VA wants to ensure veterans can trust their care, no matter where a veteran lives.

You can watch the hearing [here](#).

HVAC HOLDS BUSINESS MEETING TO ISSUE SUBPOENA FOR VA

Before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) hearing on the needs of rural veterans, the full committee held a business meeting. Business meetings are generally an opportunity for the committee to discuss matters outside of a specific subcommittee of jurisdiction or issues that impact more than one subcommittee.

PVA.org

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 Paralyzed Veterans of America

 @PVA1946

 @PVA1946

HVAC Republicans presented information about an ongoing investigation into VA's Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion. Allegations have risen from whistleblowers working within the office alleging their leadership was engaging in sexual harassment. HVAC Chairman Mike Bost (R-IL) noted that several letters have been sent to the VA with minimal response or engagement. The VA claims to be conducting its own internal investigation.

The full committee voted to subpoena the VA for documents pertaining to the investigation with a vote of 22-1. This is the first time the committee has voted to subpoena the VA since 2016.

NATIONWIDE SETTLEMENT GRANTS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO SSI BENEFICIARIES HARMED DURING PANDEMIC

On November 20, 2023, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York a settlement was approved in a nationwide class action lawsuit filed by New York Legal Assistance Group, Justice in Aging, and Arnold & Porter. The [lawsuit](#) in, *Campos v. Kijakazi*,

No. 21 Civ. 5143 (E. D. N. Y.), alleged that pandemic-related administrative errors and shutdowns led the Social Security Administration (SSA) to improperly charge overpayments and reduce or discontinue Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for millions of people.

In March 2020, the SSA closed its field offices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and halted its manual processes for reducing or discontinuing benefits for SSI recipients. As a result, many recipients struggled to report changes to their finances that could impact the amount of benefits they received, and others had bigger overpayments accrue due to this delay in processing.

This settlement will provide automatic remedies to nearly a quarter million SSI recipients, who will have back benefits credited to their accounts without having to take any action. For more information please go to: [Campos v. Kijakazi Settlement Fact Sheet](#).

ACLU SUES OVER OHIO VOTING LAW, SAYING IT VIOLATES FEDERAL DISABILITY LAW

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a [lawsuit](#) on December 19, 2023. The lawsuit alleges that Ohio's Voter ID Law, HB 458, makes voting inaccessible to voters with disabilities. Specifically, the suit alleges that the assistance restrictions are vague and create a substantial risk of criminal prosecution for voter assistance and violate the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA).

HB 458 became effective on April 7, 2023. The Ohio law makes it a felony for anyone who is not an election official or mail carrier to possess or return the absentee ballot of a voter with a disability, unless the person assisting that voter falls within a list of statutorily enumerated relatives. Under HB 458, a neighbor, in-home caregiver, staff member at a nursing home, or other group facility could face felony charges for possessing or returning the absentee ballot of a voter with a disability.

The ACLU alleges that HB 458 violates the VRA, which states that that any voter who needs help voting because of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write may be given assistance by a person of their choice. They also allege that the law violates Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act by excluding Ohio voters with disabilities from participating in and denying the benefits of Ohio's absentee voting services, programs, and activities.

NEWS OF NOTE

Access Board Moves Forward with Proposed Rule on Low Transfer Height for MDE

On January 24, the U.S. Access Board voted to send its final rule on the [low transfer height](#) for medical diagnostic equipment (MDE) to the Office of Management and Budget. The final rule is expected to be published in the near future. The Access Board originally published the MDE standards in 2017. MDE includes equipment like medical examination tables, weight scales, dental chairs, x-ray machines, mammography equipment, and other imaging equipment. The 2017 Access Board standards did not include a requirement for the low transfer height of equipment.

The Access Board's standards are not enforceable under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) until adopted by the Department of Justice (DOJ). On January 12, DOJ published a [proposed rule](#) concerning accessible MDE under Title II of the ADA. Title II prohibits disability discrimination in services, programs, and activities funded by state and local governments. Health care services that receive state and local government funds are covered under Title II of the ADA. Comments on DOJ's proposed rule can be submitted [online](#) through February 12.

U.S. ACCESS BOARD RELEASES VIDEOS EXPLAINING THE AGENCY'S WORK

The U.S. Access Board recently published three new videos on its [YouTube channel](#) to help explain its work and the resources that it offers.

The first video, "[Welcome to the U.S. Access Board,](#)" which is hosted by Executive Director Sachin Pavithran, provides an overview of the Access Board, including the development of accessibility guidelines and standards and the enforcement of the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA). The second video, "[Learn How to File an Architectural Barriers Act Complaint,](#)" provides a step-by-step guide for how anyone can [file an ABA complaint](#) if they encounter an accessibility barrier at a covered facility. Finally, the third video, "[Online Resources from the U.S. Access Board,](#)" provides a listing of different resources that the Board offers, including technical assistance, trainings and webinars, and more.

Subscribe to the Board's YouTube channel to get notified when new videos or livestreams are posted.

WEBINARS & HEARINGS

Upcoming Webinar on PVA's 2024 Policy Priorities to Prepare for our National President's Testimony

Join us on February 27 at 3:00 PM ET for a webinar about how you can advocate for our 2024 policy priorities during PVA's upcoming congressional testimony. The webinar will feature a special intro by PVA National President Robert Thomas and an overview of our 2024 policy priorities, key legislation, and a preview of National President Thomas' testimony.

We will also discuss ways you can get involved and a toolkit that can be used to help us spread the word on issues important to PVA members, their families, and caregivers.

To attend the webinar, please register by clicking [here](#). We look forward to your participation!

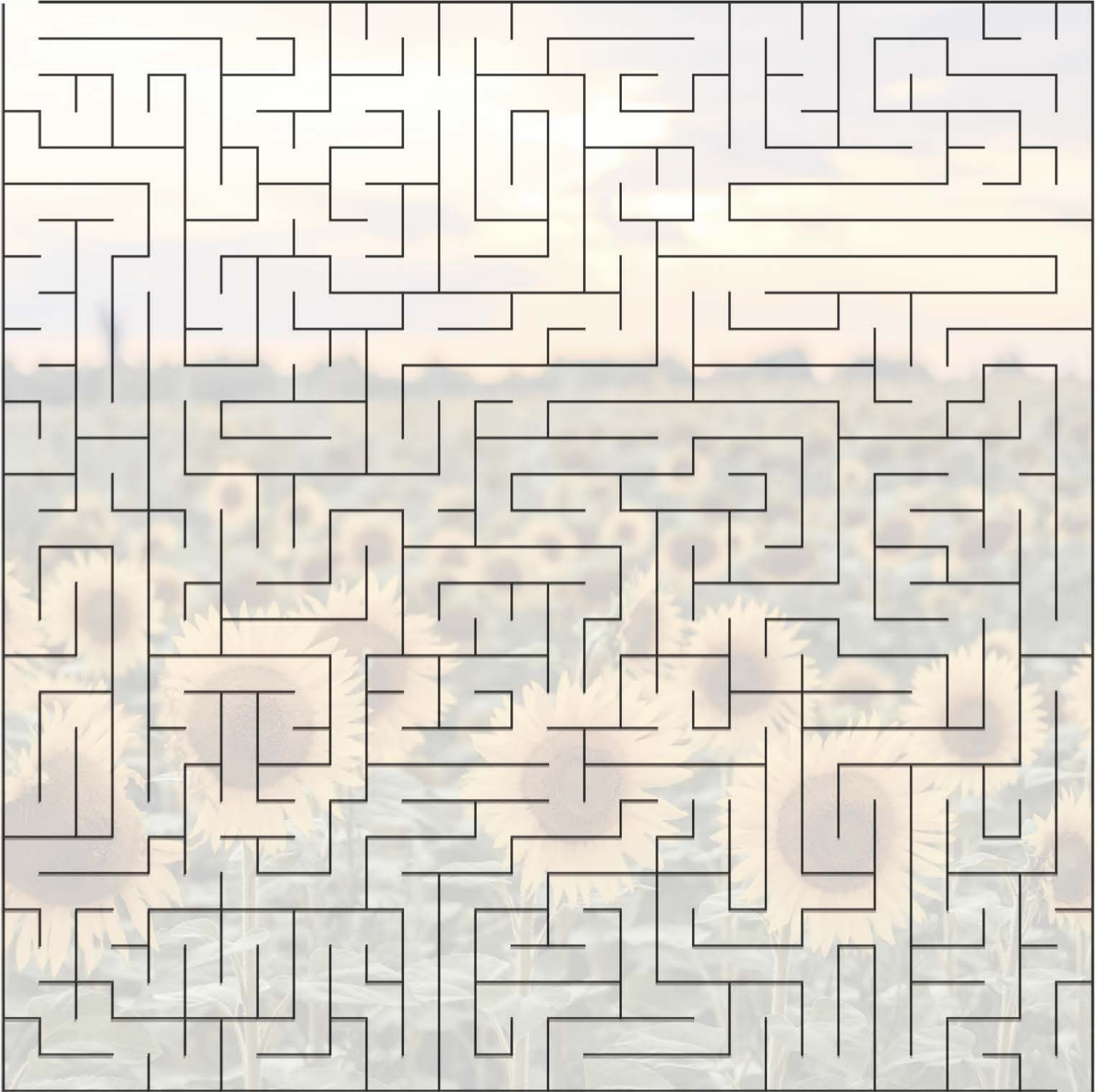
Upcoming Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on upcoming hearings and markups.

Spring Maze



Help the gnome get home



Who is eligible to participate in the program?

Must be a BPVA Member in good standing for a minimum of 90 days to participate. The Committee has the option to make exceptions for extenuating circumstances.

What is the acceptable time period before the program becomes available for use?

The BPVA member must be hospitalized for a minimum of one week.

What is the acceptable distance for mileage reimbursement?

The mileage reimbursement will be given to visitors for travel to a VA hospital in the State of Ohio for the well-being of members who are hospitalized. Beginning and ending travel must be in the State of Ohio.

How much is the reimbursement?

Reimbursement will be at a rate of .20 per mile. Mileage will be determined via MapQuest based on the submission of the visitor of the beginning and ending address. Chapter will reimburse up to 2 trips per month with a \$2,000 cap per year.

Reimbursement request containing the name of the member, name and address of the visitor, the date of visitation and the origin of the trip must be submitted by the 20th of the following month, with payment at the end of month. Request for reimbursement will only be valid for one calendar month following travel.

How will reimbursement be paid?

Reimbursements will be via check.

What locations are included in the program?

Reimbursement will be for Ohio VA hospitals only.

MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT



MAXIM HEALTHCARE SERVICES

**You Served Us;
Now Let Us
Serve You.**



Maxim Healthcare Services offers a variety of home care services that allow veterans to receive care in the comfort of home. We serve veterans with ALS, brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, tracheostomies, ventilators and more.

We work with the VA, TRICARE and CHAMPVA to serve veterans and their families.

Contact us today!
www.maximhealthcare.com



ADVERTISE WITH BUCKEYE PVA

Looking to get your information out to the Paralyzed Veteran Community? Look no further than advertising with Buckeye PVA in the Buckeye Banner! The Buckeye Banner is published quarterly and is filled with event updates, special offers for our Paralyzed Veterans, and even ads for companies and products built to improve the lives of our members! If you would like to advertise in the Buckeye Banner, ads must be purchased by September 30, 2024! Artwork for ads must be submitted to the Buckeye Banner Editor, Sarah Hoffman 1 month prior to publishing date of each newsletter. If you do not have the artwork for your ad, artwork can be created by Editor for an additional charge.

Advertising Rates for the Buckeye Banner:

1 Full Page Color for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$3,500
1 Full Page B/W for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$3,000
1 Half Page Color for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$2,000
1 Half Page B/W for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$1,500
1 Quarter Page Color for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$1,000
1 Quarter Page B/W for 1 fiscal year* (4 issues).....	\$750

1 Full page Color for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$1,000
1 Full page B/W for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$850
1 Half page Color for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$600
1 Half page B/W for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$475
1 Quarter page Color for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$400
1 Quarter page B/W for 1 quarterly issue**.....	\$300

***Ads purchased for an entire fiscal year are up for renewal on September 30th. Ads can be updated throughout the year and issues are released the first week of December, March, June and November**

****Ads purchased for 1 quarterly issue must be submitted 30 days prior to release dates**

Please contact Sarah at sarahh@buckeyepva.org or by telephone at 216-731-1017 to advertise with Buckeye PVA today!

Connect With What Matters



Being there makes a difference

It could be a simple trip to the mall, a ride to the movies or just a visit to friend's home. The little things in life can make a big difference. It's why MobilityWorks® has been helping veterans connect with who and what matters most since 1997. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together to find the best solution.

MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation's veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

MobilityWorks has more than 90 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Converted minivans and full-size vans, and SUVs — Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, Honda and Toyota
- Pre-owned accessible vehicles
- The latest in adaptive technology including transfer and turning seats, scooter lifts and hand controls
- Complete maintenance and service on adaptive driving equipment, lifts and conversions
- Daily, weekly and long term rental vans
- Financing options to fit your personal needs
- 24-hour roadside assistance with wheelchair transportation

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.



Certified Mobility Consultants Provide Comprehensive Needs Analysis



Scooter lifts, turning seats, and driving accessories

Akron
810 Moe Dr.
Akron, OH 44310
330-247-6295

Bedford Heights
5040 Richmond Rd.
Bedford Heights, OH 44146
440-305-8995

Columbus / Plain City
7233 Industrial Pkwy
Plain City, OH 43064
614-289-8138

Dayton
214 Valley St.
Dayton, OH 45404
937-998-1716

Sharonville
11755 Mosteller Rd.
Sharonville, OH 45241
513-686-1151

Toledo
1020 Laskey Rd.
Toledo, OH 43612
419-476-4166

www.mobilityworks.com


mobilityworks®
be there

Emergency Assistance Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter has available an Emergency Assistance Program.

This program helps members of the Buckeye Chapter who may find themselves in financial distress causing possible eviction from their homes, disconnection of utilities or the inability to pay for food.

Members must be in good standing for a mini-mum of 90 days prior to qualifying for consider-ation. Application for help is limited to twice

yearly or up to a maximum of \$500 per year. This is a confidential process. Payments must be made directly to the vendor. Please contact the Chapter office for more details. (800) 248-2548 or (216) 731-1017.

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU
ARE NOT ALONE... WE ARE
ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU.**

VA Emergency Care

In most instances, Veterans are eligible to receive VA authorized emergency care at an in-work facility if the VA is notified of the emergency event within 72 hrs. Veterans do not need to check with the VA before going to an emergency department in the community or calling an ambulance and, during an emergency, veterans are encouraged to seek medical attention without delay. To simplify and streamline this emergency care notification process, VA established a national emergency care contact center. This center allows community providers to report instances of a Veteran presenting to a community emergency department and offers simplified access to VA for care co-ordination, eligibility determination, and payment authorization information. The person notifying the VA should be prepared to supply case-specific information, as seen below.

• For more information please visit:
https://www.va.gov/vaforms/medical/pdf/10-10143g_Non-VA_Hospital_Emergency_Notification_Fill.pdf

• For information about care coordination, documentation submission, eligibility, claims and payments visit:
https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info_EmergencyCare.asp

Veteran Information	Treating Facility Information
Name	National Provider Identifier (NPI)
Social Security Number	Name
Date of Birth	Address
Address	Point of Contact (POC) Name
Date Presenting to Facility	POC Phone#
Date of Discharge	POC Email Address
Admitted? (YES/NO)	Note: POC will receive VA authorization decision info
Chief Complaint/Admission DX and/or Discharge DX	

Please cut around the dotted line to keep this important information with you at all times

Paralyzed Veterans of America Vehicle Donation Program

Turn Your Used Vehicle Into Support for Paralyzed Veterans of America



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Vehicle Donation Program

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.



Donating your car is easy, and your gift is tax-deductible

Vehicle donations to PVA are tax-deductible! Most vehicles are sold through local used-car markets. Our vehicle donation program works to get the highest return per vehicle and handles all the paperwork, too! Whether your vehicle sells for \$500 or less, more than \$500, or more than \$5000, you will be provided with the proper donation tax receipt(s).



Call 877-900-VETS or donate online at pva.careasy.org

**PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
BUCKEYE CHAPTER**

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Willoughby Hills, OH 44092

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Permit 4318

Help Us Serve America's Veterans



buckeyepva.org

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For more information, call (800) 248-2548

Or visit www.buckeyepva.org

