

Buckeye Banner

Fall 2024



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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

October 31st: Halloween

November 11th: Veterans Day

November 28th: Thanksgiving

Chain of Command

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Carl Harris, President	carlh@buckeyepva.org
Milton Young, Vice President	miltony@buckeyepva.org
Holly Koester, Secretary	hollyk@buckeyepva.org
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DISCLAIMER

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



The warm weather is starting to fade and fall is approaching. Before you know it, it will be time for carving pumpkins and drinking apple cider. I hope you can get out and enjoy the few nice sunny days we have left before it starts getting too cold.

I would like to share our results for the past election we just had. Our new President will be Milton Young, I will be the Vice President, Robert Morris is our Treasurer and Holly Koester is our Secretary. Our board members are Paul Mann, Scott Law, Lucas Meyer, Larry Bostic, and Tiffany Davison. This is our new board for the next two years. I know they will do a good job running our chapter and Milton will be a good President.

We have a few events coming up rather soon. We have our golf outing happening on the 9th of September. We are hoping for a good turn out of golfers this year. Anyone who wants to come out to sit at the holes and cheer on the golfers is more than welcome to attend. We will have a nice steak dinner after with raffle prizes to have your luck at. Hopefully we get a nice sunny day for our event!

We also have an ALS walk on the 15th of September being held at the Cleveland Zoo. Further down in the Banner there is a flyer with more information about the event. You can sign up for the walk or donate if you are unable to attend. It will be a nice event and I encourage you to go out if you are able to.

In the next coming months we have our holiday gift card program. Around October be on the lookout for a letter in the mail asking which gift card you would prefer.

I will still be the President until October 1st. As always, your concerns, issues, or ideas that can help you or make our chapter better are always welcome. Please either contact me at the chapter office or email me at carlh@buckeyepva.org. After the 1st please direct all concerns to our new President Milton at the office or miltony@buckeyepva.org.

Sincerely

Carl Harris

Carl Harris, President

Government Relations Director's Report



Courage is that attitude of mind and heart that enables us to face danger, obstacles, and the challenge of life fearlessly, firmly, and calmly. Developing courage comes. Meditate upon the word of God. Meditate upon the word day and night. Obey the word of God and keeping God's word in your heart. Recall God faithfulness in the past. How God has brought you through all the difficult times in your life. Observe courage in others. Determine what is at stake. Joshua 1:5 as I was with Moses, so I will be with you, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

You see I did not write anything dealing with government relations or the VA. This message is for for all paralyzed veterans of America and just regular people. Sometimes when you're having a rough day and things aren't going your way maybe you can read this and it will give you the will to go on with your day. Because it takes courage to live and do the things we do.

Be safe and God bless you.

Sincerely yours

Milton Young

Milton Young, Government Relations Director



Benefits Update

By: Michael Yaskowiak

Fraud Prevention

Have you been affected by fraud? If you haven't, you probably know someone that has been in some shape or form. Nowadays fraud, identity theft, and scams have become widespread. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) estimated that in 2022 alone, veterans reported \$292 million in losses to fraud. Scammers continue to take advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud, and fraud attempts targeting Veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors are becoming more prevalent. Scammers often target Veterans because they have access to benefits and resources; and some are elderly and may not be tech savvy.

VA announced the launch of VSAFE.gov and 1-833-38V-SAFE (1-833-388-7233), a new government-wide website and call center designed to protect veterans, service members, and their families from fraud and scams.

The website provides information about common fraud schemes, tools to protect veterans and families from fraud, and an option for reporting fraud, and to obtain further assistance. VSAFE (Veterans, Servicemembers, and Families Fraud Evasion) is an interagency effort. The call center and website combine resources from the Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of State, Social Security Administration, Internal Revenue Service, and the Office of Management and Budget ensuring Veterans and service members have to access reporting tools and resources to identify and prevent fraud.

VA is also launching a campaign to spread awareness of the rising threat of claims predators and conducting outreach to veterans, and their family members, caregivers, and survivors in order to provide information and guidance to protect their benefits.

If a veteran suspects a scam or fraud, they should file a report at www.vsafe.gov or by calling 833-38V-SAFE. To learn more about fraud, predatory practices targeting the veteran community and how to protect their benefits from fraud, veterans can also visit [Protecting Veterans From Fraud | Veterans Affairs \(va.gov\)](https://www.va.gov/protecting-veterans-from-fraud/).

Berea Eagles # 2282

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
(440) 625-0696**

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.

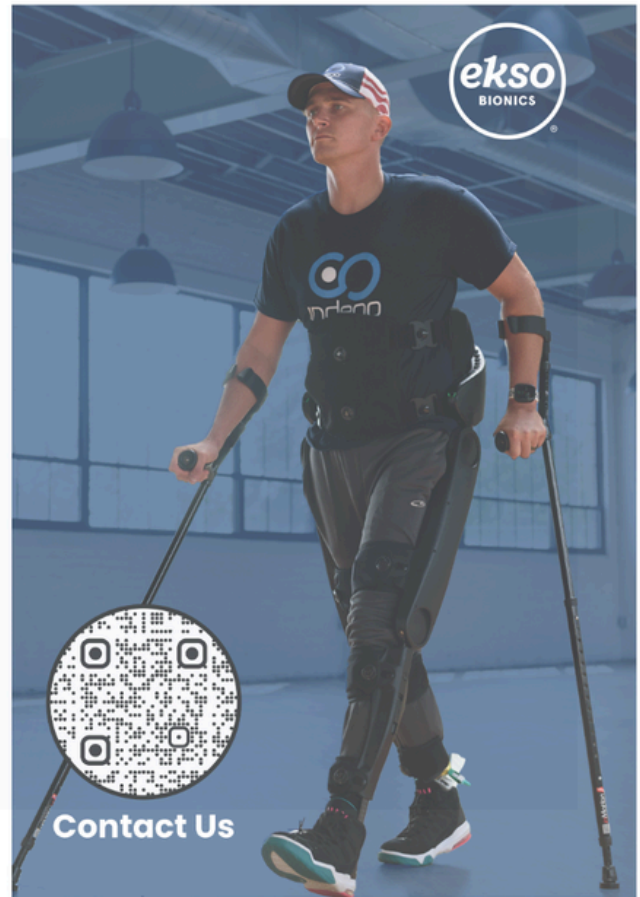
- Walk at home and in your community
- Improve your cardio and bone density
- Enjoy eye-level conversations again

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/



New Board Members



Please welcome 2 new members to our board!



**Larry Bostic
&
Tiffany Davison**





BPVA Fundraising

Did you know that you can support the Buckeye PVA by making a gift using your IRA?

Gifts of this type are called “qualified charitable distributions or (QCD).” Federal law allows people age 70½ or older to make direct transfers up to \$100,000 per year per person to charitable organizations from their Individual Retirement Account (IRA), without the withdrawal being treated as taxable income. The withdrawal can be counted towards your Required Minimum Distribution.

This information is provided as an overview to help you understand giving options you may have. Please contact your own tax advisor for detailed questions or information specific to your own situation.

Q From which accounts can I make transfers?

A Transfers must come from your IRA, made payable to Paralyzed Veterans of America Buckeye Chapter. 401(k), 403(b), and other retirement plans do not qualify. Ask your advisor about transferring funds from these other accounts to an IRA.

Q How do I make my gift?

A Contact your IRA custodian and follow their procedures to request a “Qualified Charitable Distribution.” The check must be accompanied by your name and address information for you to receive a written acknowledgement from us.

Please provide the recipient information below to your custodian, along with our Tax ID# 23-7193597. Please direct your check, drawn on your IRA account and made payable to Paralyzed Veterans of America Buckeye Chapter, to:

Paralyzed Veterans of America Buckeye Chapter
2775 Bishop Rd Ste B
Willoughby Hills OH 44092

Q Can I deposit my IRA withdrawal in my personal, non-IRA account, then write a check from that account?

A No, the funds must be transferred directly from your IRA. If not, you must report the withdrawal as taxable income.



Q My IRA custodian wants to mail a check directly to the charity. Is that allowed?

A Yes, many custodians will mail a check directly to the charity. However, if you want a written acknowledgment, it's important for you to instruct your custodian to include your name and address.

Q Do I need to notify Buckeye PVA about my QCD?

A Yes, please notify Betsey Kamm at 216-731-1017 or betseyk@buckkeypva.org when your gift is on the way and provide the following information:

Gift amount

Your name and address

Name of the financial institution sending your gift

Q Will I receive a gift acknowledgement?

A We will mail an acknowledgement to you if your name and address are provided along with the check or if you notify us about your gift at 216-731-1017. You may not use the acknowledgement to claim a deduction. (See "tax implications" below.)

Q What are the tax implications?

A Federal: The transfer is not recognized as a taxable withdrawal from your IRA and does not afford you an income tax charitable deduction.

State: Tax laws vary by state. Some states have a state income tax and will include the transfer as income. Of those, some will allow for a state income tax charitable deduction and others will not. Other states base their state income tax on the federal income or federal tax paid.

Q I have other questions about donating to the Buckeye PVA. Whom do I contact?

A Please contact Betsey Kamm, Executive Director at 216-731-1017 or betseyk@buckkeypva.org.

Bass Fishing

By: Paul Mann

Hello Buckeye PVA members, I had the privilege to attend a mini PVA bass tournament. It occurred before the National Veterans Wheelchair Games held in New Orleans, Louisiana this year. The contestants arrived two days early for the tournament. We loaded buses at 4 AM to head to the lake. We were assigned captains and given a



small breakfast, a lunch for later, and instructions for the day. In my boat was myself, the boat captain, and a PVA photographer. We took a nice little 15-30 minute ride out to a spot that my captain knew about. We fished for a few hours with no luck. Then in about a two hour span we caught 11 fish. It must've been a nest or something because all the fish were either 11 or 11 1/2 inches long. Fun to catch, but fish had to be more than 12 inches long to keep. I actually caught the only one that was legal. It was 12 1/2 inches long and weighed

1.36 pounds. Not enough for a medal, but a lot of fun being out in a boat. It was a beautiful morning looking at baby gators, and catching fish. We did get called in as a group because a storm had moved in. But we were able to weigh in with an official from the Bass Masters tour. I received a nice bass fishing shirt and hat; a little of the tour gear. If any of you would be interested in attending the PVA bass tour, they have several dates starting in the spring. You can go out on a boat You can go with just you and your captain, or fish from the bank. You can contact Jen Purser If you have an interest, or questions. Her email is JenniferP@pva.org. We do provide the ISP if you need help with travel or lodging. Bring your sunscreen, and hope to catch a big bass.

Have a great day.

Paul Mann

Paul Mann,

Board member and Sports Director





NVWG '24

Hello Buckeye, PVA members, I was excited for the opportunity to attend the National Veterans wheelchair games in New Orleans, Louisiana last month. I arrived a few days early to attend the mini bass fishing tournament set up by the PVA. I was placed in a beautiful hotel with a view of the Mississippi River in downtown New Orleans. My hotel was not far from the venue, and not far from Bourbon Street. Athletes began arriving for the games a couple of days later. That quiet area quickly became covered with smiling athletes in wheelchairs. Through the week pushing into the convention center you could watch, bocce and pickleball matches, shooting and archery. Athletes were throwing shot put, or disc from a row of throwing chairs. You could go to the pool, and watch some swimming. You could also head over to the bowling lanes to watch a few strikes. There was a disc golf course set up, with many athletes trying this new event. Billiards is always a favorite, there were a lot of tense matches on the pool tables. Racing, weightlifting, slalom, and super G obstacle courses are some of the other events that draws in crowds. The team sports were exciting as always. Basketball had large crowds of people watching exciting games. Softball had the Degrassi family back in attendance again this year supporting us, and providing commentary. Rugby drew a crowd as the match was decided in the final minutes. I was selected to attend Kids day. We showed local children in wheelchairs some of the different events we were participating in. They were in scaled down version of the events. It is always fun, and one of the best things about the games. In my 10 days there, I was able to fish on the Bayou, play in two championship games, a All-Star game for softball, attend kids day, and won four individual gold. I was able to visit a couple of local sites, tried some of the local dishes. I tried Crayfish, Gumbo, Jambalaya, Beignets, and even oysters. They weren't the slimy in the shell kind; they were grilled, with a dab of cheese placed in a pan with a vinaigrette sauce and slices of bread. It was not something I expected to enjoy, but they were delicious. I hope this article inspires you to join us next year's NVWG In Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Sincerely,

Paul Mann

Paul Mann, Sports Director



Watching a Reds Game

I wanted to tell you about the time fellow board member Lucas Meyers called me on a warm spring day. I was at home playing with my dog, when I got a call from Lucas. He asked me if I wanted to go to a Reds game. He had explained to me that a fellow veteran retired senior chief, Jason Walter had offered to buy him tickets to a game. He asked Lucas if he knew anyone that would like to go with him. Lucas texted me, and I told him I would meet him down there. The trip down to Cincinnati isn't that tough on me. Other than lifting my chair in and out of the back. Lucas lives in the Cincinnati area, he took a bus down, and then rolled to the stadium. We met at the front gate. We hung out at The Holy Grail, a restaurant at the front gates of Great American ballpark until game time. Mr. Walter had



purchased us good seats. They were field level behind first base. We saw Elly De La Cruz hit a home run, drank a cold beer, ate some peanuts, and watched the game. Since Lucas and I are board members from southern Ohio, and most of the board is from the Cleveland area, we are not always able to attend BPVA activities up north. This was nice for us to be able to attend

event together. The Reds have not been as successful as the Guardians. Their season has not gone that well this year. But I will always be a Reds fan. They have a lot of young players. I'm sure there will be a lot of nice sunny days to watch a game next year. Nice to have events to look forward to. The Bengals season is getting ready to start. I hope to see you guys out at a ballgame.



Sincerely,

Paul Mann

Paul Mann, Sports Director



Veterans Day

By: Larry Bostic



What was recorded, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month; November 11, 1918, the “Commonwealth” known as 56 States and Nations celebrated the ending of fighting on the Western Front of World War 1 which took an estimated 4 million lives both friendly and foe. This commemoration was known as “Remembrance Day” or “Armistice Day”. This name held its place until June 1st, 1954, 70 years ago, when President Eisenhower officially changed the name to “Veterans Day” (notice no apostrophe in Veterans). November 11, 2024, will be the 70th year we celebrate Veterans Day, which most people vaguely remember the difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Memorial Day, originally known as Decoration Day is commemorated on the last Monday in May, known for mourning the military personnel who died in the line of duty and remembering those Veterans who passed on. I don’t mean for this to be a history lesson, but to be a reminder of what and why we celebrate, commemorate or observe. On November 11, 2024, we will commemorate all those young men and women who courageously joined a United States Armed Force and honorably served their country in war and peace time.

I could fill many pages with the facts of our Veterans and Military, like the estimated 41 million men and women have served in our Armed Forces over the years, 16 million just during World War 1. I could tell you that our Military now includes the Space Force. I could also tell you that the Army and Air Force were one entity until they separated on September 18, 1947.

But before I elaborate any further on the fine men and women in our Military Services, I would like to talk briefly about the other half of the Veteran “unit”. I want to talk about the Military spouses. When service members are deployed in war, or overseas, when they are on extended temporary duty, going through basic training or what we used to call in the Army “AIT” Advanced Individual Training, who was doing all the work at home? Who managed the finances, took care of the children, handled the frequent moves and all the logistics sharing more than their 50% in a Military Member’s career?

While they may not have worn the uniform, military spouses were, and still are, a vital part of a Veteran’s life. We Veterans served our Country, in war and in peace, stateside, overseas and even in international waters. But as we leave this land, we call home and go to what I hope is a greater place for all of us, we Veterans leave spouses and loved ones behind.

The United States Government does what it can, in many cases, to help those non-uniform wearing participants survive after their military Veteran has passed on, but frequently they can’t do all for everyone. If you go back 2000 years, even then, there was concern for the “widow” and the “orphan”. In Acts 6:1, of the Bible, it tells us there were many disciples doing their duty of preaching, but they found that the “widows” were being neglected. The church made a point to assign seven men of “honest report” that had “wisdom” to appoint in those positions.

The Bible also tells us in Psalm 82:3-4: Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. This Veterans Day, I hope we all remember the Veterans that served “in” uniform and those that didn’t wear the uniform. But not just Veterans Day, but throughout the year, and make our close-knit family of 41 million + Veterans and spouses a cared for people.

Adaptive Brewing Presentation

On Friday, August 23, 2024, seasoned brewmaster Jon Newton, Associate Member of The Paralyzed Veterans of America Northwest Chapter, gave a presentation to the General Membership Meeting of the Buckeye PVA, introducing the attendees to the concept of adaptive brewing. Jon, who owns the 4 Barking Dogs Brewing Company, a Nano brewery in Burien Washington, is also an Adaptive Brewing Program Coordinator and Northwest Adaptive Brewers Brewmaster. In Washington state, these efforts have resulted in an exploration by many PVA members of the joys of homebrewing and even the creation of an Adaptive Brewing Festival.

Jon not only taught the Buckeye PVA members about the basics of brewing but also shared information on how brewing can be accomplished by those using a wheelchair. He also provided the chapter with a list of all the homebrewing clubs in Ohio—of which there are many. He shared everything from required ingredients and equipment to the physical abilities needed to brew including the concept of working with a brew buddy. You can find a list of Ohio's homebrewing clubs at the American Homebrewers Association website.



<https://www.homebrewersassociation.org/homebrew-clubs/find-a-homebrew-club/>.

<https://4barkingdogsbrewery.com/>

<https://4barkingdogsbrewery.com/adaptive-brewing-program>



Caregivers



Elizabeth Dole Foundation

CARING FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Q's & A's of Caregiving

Many resources for military and veteran caregivers often go underutilized because caregivers may be unaware they exist. This article answers many common questions that caregivers may have and provides beneficial information for caregivers and veterans.

Q: How can I differentiate myself from being a spouse, friend, or loved one who helps a veteran from one who serves as a caregiver?

A: The role of caregiver is generally considered as a person who provides support and assistance to a person who needs help taking care of themselves regardless of relation. Caregivers aid with activities of daily living (ADLs) to someone who has an injury, disorder, disease, or may be elderly. ADLs are physical self-care activities that are necessary for daily survival. Examples of ADLs are personal hygiene, dressing, toileting, transferring or moving about, and eating.

Q: How can I learn more from other caregivers and where can I access their stories?

A: The Elizabeth Dole Foundation (elizabethdolefoundation.org) highlights stories of caregivers, veterans, and their families. Senator Dole has been instrumental in the caregiving movement and has promoted, empowered, and connected caregivers to one another.

Q: Are there support groups available for caregivers?

A: There are many groups available for caregivers to interact with. It is beneficial for caregivers to speak with other caregivers who can encourage and support one another. A good place to start is at your local VA. The VA has two separate programs: the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS) and the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). To sign up, contact the Caregiver Support Team at your facility or ask your Veteran's provider for a referral.

The header features a decorative border at the top with stylized trees in shades of orange, yellow, and green. The text "Caregivers cont." is written in a large, brown, serif font across the center of the header.

PGCSS is for caregivers who care for veterans enrolled with the VA. Peer support mentoring, skills training, coaching, a telephone support group, online training and programs, and referrals are examples of resources offered through this program. The PCAFC eligibility requires caregiving for veterans with a serious injury (or illness) and must have in-person personal care services. More information on eligibility information can be accessed online at www.caregiver.va.gov.

There are other opportunities for support for military caregivers and their families. More examples are AARP's Family Caregiving Website which provides information to help with medical, financial, and legal information, as well as an opportunity for caregivers to connect and support one another. You may find out more at aarp.org/caregiving or by calling (877) 333-5885. Blue Star Families connects caregivers and resources in communities. Contact them at bluestarfam.org/for-mil-families/wellness.

Q: What are some resources for times of crisis?

A: To find a mental healthcare provider in your network, seek a referral from your primary care provider. You may also search online for a therapist, counselor, social worker, or psychologist. SAMHSA is available for substance abuse help at 1-800-662-HELP (4357). Crisis Text Line: Text SIGNS to 741741. Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call or text 988, chat is also available or call 1-800273-TALK (8255); Veterans press 1. National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233; TTY 1-800-787-3224; www.thehotline.org.

Q: How can I manage my Veteran's healthcare plan?

A: Be prepared with information and documentation to save time and frustration. Have the information such as the primary and secondary medical insurance; know the cost of deductibles and co-pays, have photo IDs available as well as information on health issues and medications. Be familiar with the healthcare provider and take notes on the details of the appointment. It is important to become acquainted with the Inclusive Care system-wide approach initiated by the VA and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, as it provides an opportunity for caregivers, clinicians, and veterans to collaborate and enhance veterans' healthcare and quality of life outcomes. Furthermore, this program



Caregivers cont.



allows the caregiver to be present as an active member and should be acknowledged as a vital role in the caregiving equation. This is also an opportunity to find out if there are obstacles and barriers present and may identify how to encourage the caregiver.

Q: Does the VA have a program for veterans who cannot manage their financial affairs?

A: A caregiver may be selected to be a fiduciary for their Veteran under certain circumstances. Fiduciaries are assigned by the VA or a court to transact the veteran's financial affairs in cases of injury, disease, or age which contributes to them being unable to make their own financial decisions.

Q: Is a Power of Attorney necessary for a caregiver to have?

A: If granted, the Power of Attorney (POA) is helpful because it allows the caregiver to act on behalf of the veteran. It is helpful to have a POA for financial and medical decisions. It is wise for the caregiver to also have a trusted individual as their POA as well. Please note: POAs must be notarized.

As a caregiver, there will be many more questions that arise during your caregiving journey. Be mindful that there are many resources and solutions available. As you reach out to other caregivers and organizations, be encouraged: you are a hidden hero who has answered the call to serve our nation's heroes - Thank you for your service as well!

Be well,

Jeanette Ezell

Jeanette Ezell, Ohio Dole Caregiver Fellow

Thank You Sponsors

**THANK YOU
SO MUCH!**

The Paralyzed veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter would like to give a big thank you to all of our sponsors and everyone that supported us for our 13th annual golf outing. It was a huge success and we couldn't have done it without any of you!

Thank you to.....

Don Crago, Neil and Amy Gorman, Shirley Morgan, Kathy, Kyle, & Mark Holtz, Bakers' Local 19, Doylestown American Legion #405, Vector Screen-printing & Embroidery, Chardon VFW Post #6519, Crowbar Grill and Catering, American Legion Post #91 Blue Caps, Nate & Ashley Beckley, Elanor Peterman, Doug and Kim Beckley, Sons of American Legion Post #181 Bucyrus, VFW Post #9340, Nick & Casey Beckley, Kim & John Hirose Tobe, Simplified Facilities Group Inc., Country Roofing, and Ross Environmental

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.





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 Birthdays

September

Robert Sibert Marshall Browning **Edward Daso**
 James Letizio **George Tehan** Stephen Brandt **Paul Mann** Tracy Neu
Thomas Hornecker Julie Charette **Vernon Monroe** David Hopson
 Paul Sonye **Mark Waites** Robert Lucas **Kenneth Elick** Thomas Schmitt
David Prestegaard Robert Young **Walter Pruitt** Gary Wallace **William Fry**
 Robert Redden **Timothy Osborne** Dwight Adams **David Wood** Chris Fritts
William Dailey Emmett Pyle **Luther Preston** Paul Cook **William Larson**
 Anthony Nickolite **Kenneth Kessler** Daniel Brown **Robert Bush**
Patrick Sullivan Brian Johnson **Lauren Friedman**
 Richard Zielinski **Chadwick Watiker** Destiny Gray Brown

October

Leroy Baker Paul Kovars **James Brown**
 Kenneth Melesky **Bobby Click** David Yocom **Robert Morris**
Brian Moore Patrick Harris **Narciso Amesquita** Eric Jones
 William Drake **Ronald Hudson** James Amis **John Sarosy** Terry Smeal
Robert Sanders Stella Thomas Corlew **Wandlyn Handy** Lucas Meyer
Sarah Holley Donald Roberts **Glenn Miller** Charles Hake **Rodney Osborne**
Wondle Dinguss Eddie Dixon **Shawn Ritchhart** Lorenzo Perdue
 Daniel Crawford **Michael Gackstetter** Melvin Appell
Brian Malbrough Peter Wilson **Lary York** John Davis
 William Beckham **Eric Wright** Michael Cornwell
Christopher Dowell Tiffany Davison **Thomas Fisher**

November

Stevie Stiggers James Robinson **Mark Forsyth**
 Miller Mangham **Edward Keating** Patti Pleasant-Ross
David Belak William Phillips **Daniel Marzullo**
 Charles McGugan **James O'Harra** Gregory Weaver
Frank Sears Kevin Samuels **Michael Reynolds** Sean Couch
 Deborah McCreath **Terry Rock** Richard Might **Barry Steinnecker**
Darrell Bogan Ashley Buschur **Roderick Wright** Jeffery Roseman
 Charles Stillwell **Bryan Page** John Green **Michael Fumarola** Lee Blake
Richard Hofmeister James Bartholomew **Warren Spaulding**
 Joel Reese Randy **Hendricks Sunny** Yang **William Cooper**
John Polewchak Robert Rich **Larry Bostic** Paul Sanderson



Issue 15 • Volume 32

August 16, 2024

Washington Update

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

VA Funding Shortfall Update

Last month, we reported that Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) had introduced legislation seeking to cover a \$2.883 billion shortage in VA's fiscal year (FY) 2024 mandatory accounts that fund disability compensation, survivor, and education benefits. The Veterans Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024 would not only provide the needed funding, but would also require VA to report on potential cost savings measures within VA Central Office, direct the Government Accountability Office to review the circumstances that led to the budget shortfall, and instruct the VA to submit a revised budget for FY 2025.

Efforts to fast track the bill through the upper chamber before the August recess ended when a handful of Senators objected to considering the bill, prior to examining why the shortfall existed in the first place. As a result, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee will likely hold a hearing in early September to assess the cause of the shortfall and identify potential corrective actions. Congress needs to pass legislation addressing the funding gap before September 20. [Take action now](#) to let your members of Congress know that this shortfall must be addressed as soon as possible.

Advocacy During the August Congressional Recess

The House and Senate are only holding pro forma sessions during the month of August, so lawmakers are home working in state and local district offices. A pro forma session is a brief meeting of the chamber (e.g., a few minutes) where no formal legislative business is conducted. As a general rule, your elected officials are usually more accessible when they are in their states and districts and we encourage members to take advantage of that. Plan to attend town hall meetings or meet with them in their local offices. They may also be attending parades and other community celebrations so be sure to keep an eye out for these opportunities as well. Each of these venues offer great opportunities for you to introduce yourself to your elected officials and share your concerns with them. As a reminder, [check out PVA's policy priorities for the August recess](#).

SVAC Chairman Pushes DOD and VA Leadership to Improve MST Claims Process

Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC), recently sent letters to leadership of the VA and Department of Defense (DOD) urging them to take immediate action to improve support for servicemembers and veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma (MST).

PVA.org

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Paralyzed Veterans of America

@PVA1946

@PVA1946

The Chairman shared concerns that in the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report on Sexual Assault in the Military there was no mention of the policies implemented to improve awareness of services offered to MST survivors. A similar letter was sent to VA and DOD leadership last year after a scathing report issued by the Government Accountability Office highlighting the need to improve communication, outreach, and support for servicemembers who experienced MST.

In response to last year's letter, department leadership committed to increasing resources for survivors, but those improvements were missing from the latest Annual Report, which led to the most recent letter. One of the new policies implemented at DOD provides free and confidential counseling services to servicemembers through VA Vet Centers; however, there is no mention of this new benefit in the annual report.

MST claims processed by the VA have been a battle ground for veterans service organizations (VSO) who are frustrated with the Veterans Benefits Administration's (VBA) handling of these claims. The average wait time for an MST claim is currently more than 300 days and VSOs believe that VBA has the staff and resources to decrease that timeline.

PVA supports S. 1028/H.R. 2441, the Servicemember and Veteran Empowerment and Support Act (SAVES) of 2023, which would greatly expand and improve access to benefits for MST survivors by lessening the burden of evidence required for related disability claims. If you would like to send a message to your member of Congress urging them to support the SAVES Act, you can send it through [PVAAction Force](#).

Louisiana Faces Lawsuit Over New Absentee Ballot Laws

On July 10, Disability Rights Louisiana [filed](#) a lawsuit alleging Louisiana's new voting laws violate the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). The complaint claims that [Act No. 380](#) and [Act No. 317](#) violate the VRA by prohibiting anyone from assisting delivery of more than one absentee ballot. The complaint also alleges that [Act No. 712](#) and [Act No. 302](#) violate the VRA by prohibiting anyone from serving as a witness and assisting on more than one ballot. All four laws impose criminal penalties on perpetrators. Section 208 of the VRA gives voters with disabilities the right to receive assistance by a person of their choice. In the complaint, Disability Rights Louisiana requests that the judge issue a statewide injunction to stop the implementation and enforcement of the law to protect the voting rights of people with disabilities.

Federal Court Strikes Down Restrictions Criminalizing Voter Assistance in Ohio Bill

On July 22, Judge Bridget Brennan of the United States District Court Northern District of Ohio filed a [ruling](#) striking down a portion of [Ohio House Bill 458](#). The bill made it a felony for anyone other than a select few members of a voter's family to assist them in submitting their absentee ballot. The American Civil Liberties Union argued that the bill blocked voters with disabilities from receiving assistance from personal caregivers, neighbors, grandchildren, and other trusted people in their lives.

Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) gives people with disabilities the right to receive assistance by a person of the voter's choice. In the ruling, the judge stated that there is a clear violation of a federally guaranteed voting right in the case. The order permanently enjoins the state from implementing and enforcing the bill against voters with disabilities and those who assist them with absentee ballot return to the extent enforcement contradicts Section 208 of the VRA.

DOT Requests Comments on Its Equity Plan

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently sought [comments](#) on its update to the agency's 2022 [Equity Plan](#). The Equity Plan was developed to ensure equal access to transportation for underserved communities, including people with disabilities. In 2023, DOT published the [Equity Plan Update](#), outlining steps the department took to increase transportation equity and future goals. These actions included increasing access to safe and accessible air travel for wheelchair and scooter users. DOT also awarded grants to increase the accessibility of legacy rail public transportation systems. In the request for comments, DOT asked what activities would be most meaningful to advance transportation equity, what activities should be expanded, and what new activities can DOT consider for the future. PVA [submitted comments](#) in response to the request.

DOJ Reaches Settlement with Los Angeles County Ensuring Voting Accessibility

On August 1, the Department of Justice announced it reached a settlement agreement with the County of Los Angeles, the largest election jurisdiction in the country, following an investigation finding that individuals with disabilities were excluded from the county's in-person

voting program. Surveys of hundreds of California polling places, going back to June 2016, revealed that an overwhelming amount had architectural barriers and prevented safe access for in-person voting. Under the settlement, the county has agreed to work with an accessibility expert to ensure voting centers are accessible or can be made accessible by implementing temporary remedial measures.

Access Board Issues Final Rule on MDE Low-Transfer Height

On July 25, the Access Board issued a [final rule](#) on the low-transfer height for medical diagnostic equipment (MDE). MDE includes equipment like medical examination tables, weight scales, dental chairs, x-ray machines, mammography equipment, and other imaging equipment. The Access Board's final rule requires exam tables and chairs to lower to a height of 17 inches so wheelchair users can independently transfer from their wheelchair to the exam table or chair.

In 2017, the Access Board published [standards](#) for accessible MDE. However, the standards did not include a specified low-transfer height. The Board determined more research was necessary prior to finalizing this standard.

Notably, this rule is not enforceable until it is adopted by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Although both agencies recently published new MDE standards under [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#) and [Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#), the 17-inch requirement was not adopted. The agencies will need to proceed with the rulemaking process to adopt this new standard. The final rule is effective September 23, 2024.

DOJ Publishes Title II ADA Final Rule on Accessible MDE

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently published a [final rule](#) on accessible medical diagnostic equipment (MDE) under [Title II](#) of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). MDE includes equipment like medical examination tables, weight scales, dental chairs, x-ray machines, and mammography and other imaging equipment. Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination in health care services, programs, and activities of state and local governments. The final rule

outlines specific scoping standards and technical requirements. The requirements are based on the [standards](#) published by the U.S. Access Board in 2017.

DOJ's final rule did not adopt the Access Board's recently passed [final rule](#) requiring some MDE to lower to 17 inches. Instead, entities' have the option of acquiring MDE with a low-transfer height between 17 inches and 19 inches.

Under DOJ's final rule, at least 10 percent, but no fewer than one, of an entity's MDE must be accessible for wheelchair users. Any MDE acquired after October 8, 2024, must be accessible until the entity reaches the 10 percent requirement. Each entity must also have at least one accessible weight scale and exam table by August 9, 2026. Until the entity acquires accessible MDE, they must provide accommodations. Accommodations could include offering home visits or accessible transportation to another facility. Furthermore, staff must be trained on how to safely operate the accessible MDE. The final rule is effective October 8, 2024.

Policy Changes to Expand Access to Affordable Housing for Homeless Veterans

Recently, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made changes to longstanding agency policy that created barriers for disabled veterans when accessing VA Supportive Housing Vouchers, or HUD-VASH. With this policy change, HUD will no longer consider disability benefits as earned income when determining eligibility for rental assistance. This shift means thousands of disabled homeless veterans who were previously ineligible for rental assistance through the VA will now be able to find housing using the HUD-VASH program.

This change will be particularly impactful for homeless veterans who find themselves in areas with a high cost of living. Nearly 11,000 homeless veterans live in California, notoriously one of the most expensive states in the country. The shift in HUD policy will help many of them get off the streets and connect them to a case worker who can help with employment services and other VA benefits. Congress had been urging HUD to make the change, but HUD was hesitant to do so for fear that it would prohibit the most vulnerable from accessing HUD-VASH vouchers.

News of Note

Celebration of Social Security's 89th Anniversary

On August 14, Jeremy Villanueva, Associate Legislative Director, and Anthonya James, Advocacy Attorney, attended the White House Social Security Act Anniversary event celebrating Social Security's 89th anniversary.

The invite only event was hosted by the White House Office of Public Engagement and featured Social Security Commissioner Martin O'Malley; Representative John Larson (D-CT); Theo Braddy, National Council on Independent Living Executive Director; Economist Kathryn Edwards; and Managing Director for Justice in Aging's Economic Security team Tracey Gronniger. The event featured discussions about Social Security and its importance to older Americans and those with disabilities.

Senator Casey Introduces Bills to Expand Access to ABLÉ Accounts

On August 1, Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced three bills that increase access to the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) program. The ABLE Act of 2014 created ABLE accounts, tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities to cover qualified disability-related expenses. The funds in ABLE accounts are disregarded when determining eligibility for public assistance programs. Senator Casey's bills aim to increase awareness of ABLE accounts and allow employers to directly contribute to them.

VA Launches Updated Burn Pit Registry

Earlier this month, VA announced the launch of the redesigned Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. The Burn Pit Registry is a database that combines veteran and servicemember data to help VA better understand, research, and ultimately improve treatment for the health challenges facing veterans exposed to airborne hazards and burn pits during their military service. To learn more about the registry and the relaunch, click here.

Senate Approves Resolution on GI Bill Anniversary

Prior to the August recess, the Senate passed a resolution recognizing the 80th anniversary of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, also known as the GI Bill. Since being signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944, the GI Bill has provided critical education and housing benefits to millions of veterans and helped ease their transition from military to civilian life. You can find the text of the resolution here.

Webinars, Surveys, & Hearings

Webinar Recording Now Available: Protecting Disability Rights Through Regulation

On July 23, Senior Advocacy Attorney Danica Gonzalves and Advocacy Attorney Anthonya James dove into administrative advocacy and the importance of reviewing and responding to proposed regulations. The webinar titled, "Protecting Disability Rights Through Regulation," covered ways to use administrative advocacy when it comes to the federal rulemaking process and how groups and individuals can participate in it. You can watch a recording of the webinar here.

Accessible Air Travel: Survey

The Human Engineering Research Laboratories in Pittsburgh is conducting a national survey about accessible air travel. The study aims to estimate the pent-up demand for air travel among mobility device users and identify the specific needs and pain points experienced during their travel. Your participation will provide valuable insights that can help improve the accessibility and overall travel experience for mobility device users. The survey should take no more than 20 minutes to complete. To take the survey, please click here.

Veterans' Committee Activities

Please visit the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee webpages for information on previous and upcoming hearings and markups.

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



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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!

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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.

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- 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
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Akron, OH 44310
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Bedford Heights, OH 44146
440-305-8995

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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



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.



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

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.



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

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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

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BUCKEYE CHAPTER**

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Or visit www.buckeyepva.org

