PVA-WI Government Relations is proud to launch Voter’s Voice on our website. This grassroots advocacy system is perfect for our organization. We will have a State and National platform to contact our representatives on legislative issues important to our organization and our members. By now you’ve already received an email survey from Mr. Griffith asking if you want to join the advocacy team.

As a team member you will receive texts or emails asking you to “Take Action”. This is a simple process and only takes a few mouse clicks to make your voice heard. The software will identify your elected officials based on your home zip code. PVA-WI or PVA National will provide the written message and all you do is hit “Send”.

Visit https://wisconsinpva.org/voter-voice or if you have questions, please contact Mr. Griffith at email: sgriffith@wisconsinpva.org or call the office (414)328-8910.
Who We Are

Officers
President ……… ……..Dale Nelson
Vice President …Phillip Rosenberg
Secretary …………… Ken Ness
Treasurer/GRD …… Scott Griffith

National Director
Derrick Trentin

Directors
Peter Carrao
Todd Dravy
Ken Matthews
Michael Thomas
Derrick Trentin

Staff
Kevin Klandrud . Executive Director
Susan Gall ……. Executive Admin
& Newsletter Editor

Recreational Therapy
Joyce Casey ………………. C.T.R.S
Erinn Kulba.

National SVC Office
Eric Gonzales -Veterans Health &
Benefits Specialist
Linda Roberts … Accredited Admin
Call: 414-902-5655
Toll Free: 800-795-3580

Rehab Counselor
Doug Green ………………. MS, CRC

Office Hours
Monday—Thursday 7:30-2:00
Friday 7:30-2:00
Saturday & Sunday Closed
750 N Lincoln Memorial Dr Ste 306
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414-928-8910

Roll With Us Newsletter published quarterly
Email: info@wisconsinpva.org

Disclaimer
Any advertising that appears in this newsletter is paid for by the business or organization placing the advertisement. The Chapter does not endorse and shall not be held liable for any claims against said business or organization.

Ability Fest EveryBODY Party!

This is inclusion to the Big Gig.

Come on out and Celebrate the Abilities of Everyone.
Saturday, October 26th—November 1st
Sheraton Brookfield Hotel
375 S. Moorland Road
Brookfield, WI

- adaptive/inclusive sports & recreation
- food service by people with disabilities
- music by people with disabilities
- arts and artwork by people with disabilities
- performing arts by people with disabilities
- performances by people with disabilities
- programs and presentations by people with disabilities
- It is all by people with disabilities.
- Ability Power by the mastery of people with disabilities

Watch for more details as the date draws near.

Especially now, we need your support.
Donate a car, truck or other vehicle.
The process is easy, the pick-up is free,
and your gift is tax-deductible.

877-900-8387 (877-900-VETS)
Greetings to you all, I hope this letter finds you all well and staying safe, never before does this statement mean so much to so many. It’s not just something one says anymore in passing to be polite. No, these words carry so much more meaning as our world is now facing its first Global Pandemic since the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic back at the turn of the last century. Then it was caused by the (H1N1) flu virus also known as the Spanish Flu, it is said to have infected over 500 million people with the death tolls reported in the millions. Today we are facing COVID-19 this is a new strain of Coronavirus. We hear and see the word COVID-19 so much now but what does it mean? Let me break it down for you. The CO stands for corona the VI is for virus and the D is for disease and 19 stands for the year it became known to us.

Finally, our states and country are starting to re-open with some restrictions, this is great news. We as a nation cannot afford to stay shut down for any extended length of time. We are all looking forward to getting back to work and having a little bit of normalcy back into our lives. As you get out and start visiting your family and friends, please continue to follow the published guidelines.

PVA-WI sadly will not be resuming sports programming just yet,.We will be continuing to be in shut down through July 2020. PVA National, has sent out a letter suspending all sports grants to all its chapters effectively putting an end to the 2020 fiscal year, ending 31 July 2020. This letter also strongly suggest that we do not put on any chapter sponsored programs or events as well. This is necessary as our demographic (Our Membership) is at the most vulnerable and in the highest risk category.

I know this is hard for many of you, believe me, it is for me as well. I have always looked forward to providing as many programs as I could for our veterans. I will not let this pandemic however, put an end to PVA-WI programs this year. Example, we are now providing new ways for our members to stay active and connected. Along with the Rec-Therapy Department at the Milwaukee SCI center, we have already implemented (Minute to Win It) competition. This program uses Zoom communication and allows participants to play games with one another via a Zoom meeting. You may have already seen a few winners posted on Facebook or on our website. We are always looking for more participants, so please come and join us. In fact, I urge all of you to continue watching our website and Facebook page for new and upcoming virtual events and programs that are now being implemented.

We once again find ourselves in a battle, this time with an enemy we can not see. I thank you for your patience and for following safe guidelines. We will resume our active sports calendar and PVA programs as soon as our restrictions are lifted and its once again safe for us all to be together again. Until then Stay Safe, Stay Well.

Dale Nelson
Thanks goes to Portillos and Prime Minister restaurants' for helping us take care of the amazing hospital staff as they take care of our members!
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

I don’t need to tell you that everything this past few months has been shut down. The impact to PVA-WI has been profound. We are no longer allowed into the SCI unit at the Milwaukee VA. We are no longer allowed into the state Veteran’s Homes. All activities have come to a grinding halt.

I look forward to air rifle, bowling, and other activities with our fellow PVA members. I do miss all of you and your smiling faces. This is a phase in all of our lives, and it will change. What that change looks like is yet to be determined. Hopefully it will look more like the old than some new form where we are unable to interact face to face.

Speaking of meeting face to face if you have not joined us on Zoom then your missing out. We have had weekly meetings with the SCI staff. We have had activities via Zoom and will continue to have “virtual” meetings. If you require a device to connect please let us know. We have Facebook Portal devices available for you for no charge. That’s a $125 device that can be yours simply by asking us. One of the nice advantages of the portal device is that it can be set up with voice recognition. All you do is tell the device to “wake up” and then tell it what to do. Very handy for those that have difficulty with tapping a screen.

PVA-WI is planning on having a Fall caregiver wellness getaway. This will be for 15 caregivers and the members that they care. We are planning on having one day as a spa day and the second day working with the VA and others regarding benefits and other hands on activities. Watch our Facebook and website for more one this as it comes together. Our website is: https://wisconsinpva.org/

Our office is staffed in person three days a week and part time the other two days. You can always reach us via phone or via email. We are here to serve the members of PVA-WI and will continue to do so in the future.

Kevin Klandrud

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Lennox Launches Feel The Love™

Lennox is proud to introduce our new community program, Feel The Love™. Formerly known as Heat UP, Feel The Love allows Lennox® partners to support local communities by providing neighbors-in-need with a new furnace, just in time for cold weather season.

Want to nominate someone in your community? From now until September 5th visit www.FeelTheLove.com to review the nomination criteria and to submit your nomination. Nominees will be notified in September and then all installations will happen on Saturday, October 6. Be sure to follow Feel The Love on Facebook to learn more about the program and to see coverage from this year’s program and Installation Day.
We certainly are living in unprecedented times. Hopefully by the time this newsletter is published our communities will be safely back open and we’ll be able to resume life as we knew it with a few modifications. Our chapter has reached out to many of you in hopes to stay connected and to ensure that you and your family have been safe and have the necessary supplies you need to sustain during this pandemic.

We have been holding weekly Zoom video chats with Dr. Lee and his SCI team of professionals here in Milwaukee. These sessions have been recorded and our available to view in our YouTube channel at [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHa5v0lj4CEMP-TqW2gaydg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHa5v0lj4CEMP-TqW2gaydg)

**What has VA done?**

VA has implemented an aggressive public health response to protect and care for Veterans, their families, health care providers, and staff in the face of this emerging health risk. We are working directly with the CDC and other federal partners to monitor the outbreak of the virus.

VA has administered over 179,287 COVID-19 tests nationwide, while taking aggressive steps to prevent COVID-19 transmission. These measures include outreach to Veterans and staff, clinical screening at VA health care facilities, and protective procedures for patients admitted to community living centers and spinal cord injury units.

- VA now has drive through COVID-19 testing but you must call the out patient clinic at (414)384-2000, ext 45845 to get an order placed in the system before arriving at the drive through site. See the below information.

**What should Veterans do?**

Veterans with symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath should immediately contact their local VA facility. VA urges Veterans to contact VA before visiting – you can find contact information for your closest VA facility. Alternatively, Veterans can sign into My HealtheVet to send secure messages to their VA providers or use telehealth options to explain their condition and receive a prompt diagnosis.

Read responses to Veterans' frequently asked questions about accessing their VA benefits.

Upon arriving at VA, all patients will be screened for flu-like symptoms before they enter in order to protect other patients and staff. A VA health care professional will assist you with next steps once this screening process is complete.

At this time, VA is urging all visitors who do not feel well to please postpone their visits to VA facilities.

**How to protect yourself**

Continued on page 10
I am a 41-year-old quadriplegic 20-year veteran. Just a brief summary of who I am and what level injury I experience. I was injured June 5, 1999 at Fort Hood, Texas. It was a fall accident where I fell off the barracks. I was an E4, Specialist, Bradley systems mechanic in the Regular Army.

Now for the gamer side of me. I’ve been playing video games most of my life until my injury. I’ve played on a Coleco vision, Atari, Nintendo the gray box, Super Nintendo, Nintendo 64, Play station one, Nintendo Game Boy, and the Sega Game Gear. Post injury I’ve only been able to play Facebook games like Billiard Games and Family Farm.

Then I got injured and the whole time in rehab the only commercials I seemed to be seeing were the game systems of the future. It was a little depressing. So, the last 20 years it’s been family farm, command and conquer, and the billiards games. But three games are better than none.

One day Independence First in conjunction with the VA, had a video game demonstration going on and somebody asked if I would go take a look. I went and that’s when I met Chris Hege who said “if you want to play games we will get you to play the games”. It took a couple visits starting in November 2019 and now it’s February 2020 and I have the system in my house. Katie Schultz the technology wizard of the VA helped put together everything that I would need to play the games. Chris Hege was tasked with the quad stick programming. Looks like there’s also a NPO called Stack House, who sent me a care package at no charge, chucked full of games. I went from a zero to a hero overnight. They also sent Game passes and a Trojan Warriors statue as well as shirt and stickers.

So three groups got together and made this veteran super happy! It came out of the blue because like I said I wrote it off 20 years ago. That’s why I am writing this letter, because I want any quadriplegic or any level injury to get to contacting these gaming people so that you can be hooked up just as well as I have. It’s been a great experience and my hopes are that it can be repeated for many other veterans in a similar predicament.

Matthew Lemke, member
Wisconsin’s 2020 Primary election is Tuesday August 11th.

Go to https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/ for details or to request an absentee ballot by mail.

We are launching our new Call To Action platform. See the article on the front cover. Please help us provide a collective voice on Veteran issues in Wisconsin and in Washington D.C.

In late May, The House passed by voice vote an annually required measure to increase cost-of-living adjustments tied to veterans benefits in parity with the COLA approved by the Social Security Administration. Senate passage and the president’s signature would normally be mere formalities, but those could face delays this year as Congress deals with the COVID-19 pandemic that has disrupted regular schedules.

Veterans benefits affected by the COLA increase include disability and dependent compensation; clothing allowances; and dependency and indemnity compensation to surviving spouses and children.

The 2018 COLA increase for both veterans and Social Security recipients was 2.0%; it was 2.8% in 2019, according to SSA. Last year saw an increase of 1.6%. It is difficult to project what it might be for 2021 in an economy ravaged by the novel coronavirus.

For questions or concerns about current legislation at the Federal or State level, or any ADA concerns, please contact Mr. Griffith at email: sgriffith@wisconsinpva.org or call the chapter office.

Scott Griffith, GRD

As you are documenting your final wishes for your family remember to have them contact PVA-WI so that we can provide the marker for your grave stone. Usually it is attached by the grave stone provider. It is shipped out free of charge upon request. Please call the office to receive your gift. 414-328-8910
Your Life. Your Ride.

Rollx Vans is the only van manufacturer that delivers minivans and full-sized vans directly to your doorstep. Our mission is to listen to you to serve your needs and give you the freedom and mobility that you deserve.

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- 24 Hour Nationwide Service
- At-Home Delivery
- Industry-Leading Customer Satisfaction
- Competitive Financing Options
- Customized Just for You

We take great pride in serving those who served our country.

It's why we work with the Veterans Administration to make the process as simple as possible for you. This includes bringing the vehicle to the VA for inspection, taking care of all VA paperwork, and delivering the vehicle to your home once it's ready.

Veterans get $1,000 off the purchase of your first Rollx van today! Call 800-956-6668 or visit us at rollxvans.com.
Currently, there is no vaccine to prevent the COVID-19 infection and no medication to treat it. CDC believes symptoms appear 2 to 14 days after exposure. Avoid exposure and avoid exposing others to an infection with these simple steps.

Learn to use VA Video Connect through the VA mobile app store or by contacting your VA care team, before any urgent problems arise.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An easy way to mark the time is to hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice while scrubbing.

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home when you are sick or becoming sick. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue (not your hands) and throw the tissue in the trash.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Getting a flu shot is recommended.

***Please contact the chapter office if you need assistance with anything during this Pandemic, (414)328-8910.***

Please contact your physician if you need to be tested.

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<th>Veterans who meet the following criteria may be considered for a drive-thru test:</th>
<th>The following Veterans will continue to be tested at the East Entrance:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Patients who do not require a nasopharyngeal swab</td>
<td>9. Patients who are symptomatic</td>
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<td>2. Patients who are able to come via private vehicle – no walk ups allowed</td>
<td>10. Patients requiring pre-procedure testing ordered by the LIP performing the procedure</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Patients who are mildly symptomatic and a clinical assessment is not required at the drive-thru by a provider</td>
<td>11. Patients without a private vehicle requiring testing</td>
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<td>4. Patients with known or suspected exposure to COVID-19</td>
<td>12. All other patients meeting criteria outlined in the Inpatient/Admission CPRS COVID-19 order set</td>
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<td>5. Patient requiring follow up testing from previous positive COVID-19 test</td>
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<td>6. Patients requiring testing to return to work</td>
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<td>7. Patients requiring testing for placement in a long-term care facility</td>
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<td>8. Patients requiring testing to receive care from a home health agency</td>
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Universal Deduction for Donations Up to $300
For the over 9 out of 10 people who no longer itemize their charitable giving, the CARES Act will allow these individual taxpayers to deduct donations to charity of up to $300 on their 2020 federal tax return, even though they take the standard deduction. Married-filing-jointly taxpayers will get an above-the-line deduction of up to $600.

Raising the Charitable Giving Deduction Cap
For those donors who are still able to itemize their deductions, and therefore directly write off gifts to charity, the current deduction cap is 60% of adjusted gross income*. Corporations are able to deduct charitable donations up to 10% of taxable income.

The CARES Act lifts these caps to 100% for individuals and joint filers, while corporations will see their cap lifted to 25% for 2020. These are truly substantial changes to the tax treatment of donations. For individuals, it could theoretically mean zero taxable income if someone gives big.

For example, if John Taxpayer has an AGI of $175,000, he would normally be able deduct up to $105,000 for gifts to charity. With the temporary changes in the CARES Act, John could now deduct up to his full AGI of $175,000 if he gives that much to charity in 2020. The math works the same way for corporations.

An interesting side note is that the deductibility cap for donations to Donor Advised Funds wasn’t included, even though they technically qualify as public charities.

HONORING THE GREATEST GENERATION

WORLD WAR II

75TH ANNIVERSARY

- JULY-DECEMBER EXHIBIT: ON THE HOMEFRONT - THE MILWAUKEE WAR EFFORT 8 AM-5 PM | FREEDOM GALLERY @MILWAUKEE COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL
- AUG 29-SEPT 3 FIELD OF FLAGS VETERANS PARK/MACARTHUR STATUE
- SEPT 1 TRAVELING WWII MEMORIAL OPENING CEREMONY 10 AM | FITCH PLAZA
- SEPT 1-3 TRAVELING WWII MEMORIAL FITCH PLAZA
- SEPT 1, 8 AM-5 PM SEPT 2, 8 AM-2 PM SEPT 3, 8 AM-5 PM SEPT 2 TICKETED VICTORY DINNER - WWII VETERANS WELCOME! 5 PM-9 PM more info @warmemorialcenter.org
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 2 & 3       PVA Office closed for the July 4th Holiday
July 8th        PVA Board of Directors meeting via ZOOM
August 12th     PVA Board of Directors meeting via ZOOM
September 4th   PVA Office closing at 1:00 p.m. for Labor Day Holiday
September 7th   PVA Office closed for Labor Day Holiday
September 9th   PVA Board of Directors meeting via ZOOM
September 20th  PVA Annual membership banquet—watch for more information in the mail

For more information about events, please see the events on our website!

www.wisconsinpva.org/events/

GRANTS AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

The Kelly Brush Foundation  2020 Fall Active Fund Cycle - Application open 1 June and closes 23 Sep 2020
https://kellybrushfoundation.org/theactivefund/

Challenged Athletes Foundation  Grants open this Fall
https://www.challengedathletes.org/grants/

Advertise in the Roll With Us newsletter

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1200 copies are printed each quarter, electronic versions are on our website and 300 copies emailed too.

Deadlines are the 1st of the month prior to the issue—Jan-Mar, April-June, July-Sept., Oct-Dec. Payment by check or credit card.
NEW Membership Application

Have you heard? PVA has a new online membership application! Eligible veterans can skip the paperwork and apply now at [http://pva.org/membership](http://pva.org/membership). Please invite your fellow paralyzed veterans to become a proud PVA member. Together, we’re united to make the world better for veterans and all people with disabilities.

Starting 21 May, 2020, Google Maps will feature a new mode called Accessible Places that, when toggled on, will more prominently show wheelchair accessibility info, the company announced. It will be rolling out gradually, the company says, for both Android and iOS.

“When Accessible Places is switched on, a wheelchair icon will indicate an accessible entrance and you’ll be able to see if a place has accessible seating, restrooms or parking,” Google explains in a blog post. “If it’s confirmed that a place does not have an accessible entrance, we’ll show that information on Maps as well.”

Google designed the feature for the 130 million global wheelchair users, of which 30 million reside in the US, and it built it using the crowdsourced efforts of its Local Guides volunteers, who helped double the number of accessibility listings for businesses to more than 15 million after Google put a call for help in 2017. “Store owners have also helped, using Google My Business to add accessibility information for their business profiles to help users needing stair-free access find them on Google Maps and Search,” Google says.

“To get wheelchair accessibility information more prominently displayed in Google Maps, update your app to the latest version, go to Settings, select “Accessibility,” and turn on “Accessible Places.” The feature is available on both Android and iOS,” Google says.

The company is also giving iOS users the ability to more easily contribute accessibility information, as is the case for the Android version of Google Maps. “This guide has tips for rating accessibility, in case you’re not sure what counts as being ‘accessible.’ We invite everyone to switch on Accessible Places and contribute accessibility information to help people in your community,” Google says.

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**PLEASE REMEMBER TO VOTE FOR THE NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS!**

**Watch the mail in August for your ballot!**
PVA is highlighting Ken Matthews in this issue. Many of you already know him, as he is the familiar face on the SCI Unit. Ken mentors to many veterans as well as serving the PVA as the Hospital Liaison, and an advocate for the membership for the annual site visit with PVA National. Ken is the guy with the smile, who always has time to listen and give an encouraging word.

Ken is a Navy veteran, who served from 1972-1976, to include 3 tours in Vietnam. Ken was on board of a combat storages ship in charge of inventory and disbursement of supplies. When asked about what he recalled from that time, he stated that many friendships were made, and the camaraderie between the people on the ship stuck out the most in his mind.

In 2003, a car accident changed Ken’s life completely, now he is a tetraplegic. Positive changes resulted from this, as he is now supportive of those who are dealing with negatives in their life. He appreciated those who were willing to assist him and he learned to ask for help when he needed it.

Ken enjoys crossword puzzles, sudoku, and other puzzles. Stays active in sports through the SCI Unit, such as boccia, and cycling and attends the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Ken has attended the games for 15 years and is looking forward to 2021 in New York! A fond memory of the games was when he completed the slalom course for the first time!

As a member of PVA, Ken has served as a board member since 2006. He has served on the executive committee as vice-president and treasurer over the years and has represented the chapter in Washington D.C. in advocacy and legislation. Ken also has served on many committees during these years. PVA is thankful for his devotion for so many years.

Are you a Veteran struggling to keep your air or heat or power on?

Heat for Heroes may be able to help!

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An Energy Services, Inc., and Keep Wisconsin Warm/Cool Fund Initiative
Indego Exoskeleton Available for Veterans
Thanks to New VA Policy

Powering Veterans Forward

“I most enjoy using Indego in my neighborhood, walking around, going outside, talking to my neighbors.”
- Jim Dahlin, US Army Veteran, first veteran to receive Indego through VA policy

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- Lightweight (26 lbs) with modular design that breaks into 5 components for easy transportation
- Slim design can be worn in most wheelchairs
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- Rapid self set up (average 5 minutes)
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Contact National Sales Manager, Brian Schultz, for more information or to try Indego at a screening day near you.

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www.indego.com

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PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

RESEARCH on MANUAL WHEELCHAIR USERS with SCI

Title: Prediction of Shoulder Injury for Disease Prevention in Children and Adults with Spinal Cord Injury Using Advanced Biomechanical Modeling and Diagnostic Imaging

Purpose: To investigate wheelchair movement patterns, pain, and shoulder pathology in participants to enhance health, independence and quality of life. These findings are essential for developing interventions to prevent and treat secondary conditions of manual wheelchair use.

Time: 6 hours maximum, completed over your choice of 1 or 2 visits

Activities: Surveys, shoulder evaluation, wheelchair propulsion
All non-invasive!


Location: The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Mobility Lab
1225 Discovery Parkway, Wauwatosa, WI

UWM Mobility Lab Website: https://uwm.edu/mobilitylab/

If interested, please contact:
Theresa Lins linst@uwm.edu

This study is being conducted at the UWM Mobility Lab. This is not VA approved research, will not be conducted by VA, has not been reviewed by VA’s Institutional Review Board, and is not endorsed by the VA. VA is not responsible for any costs incurred by a Veteran if the Veteran enters the study as a research subject. This announcement is being provided for information only.

VA Research approved for posting thru 11/30/2020
SPINAL CORD INJURY CENTER
Milwaukee, WI

VA VIDEO CONNECT (VVC)

- VA Video Connect (VVC) allows you to see our providers in the comfort of your own home.
- Use any smart device, as long as it is connected to the internet.

Providers

Farhad Sepahpanah, MD
Nicole Rosin, NP
Stan Rintelman, NP
Vaishnavi Muqet, MD
Linda Daufenbach, NP

Staff not pictured: Denis F. Castillo, MD

VA Video Connect (VVC) requires 3 simple steps:
1. Make a VA Video Connect (VVC) appointment. An email invitation will be sent to you confirming the date/time of your appointment.
2. Open the email invitation and click on the link in the email.
3. The directions provided in the link will lead you through a couple easy steps.

Once you complete these steps you will enter into a virtual medical room with your provider.

Request an appointment with your provider today!
Please call 414-384-2000, extension 42454
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Fax: 715-874-6650
2650 Prospect Drive
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Fax: 608-579-1502
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MCFarland, WI 53558

Green Bay
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Toll-Free: 877-830-1330
Rentals: (920) 775-4388
Fax: 920-632-7167
1330 Mid Valley Drive
De Pere, WI 54115

STK# JR363933
Similar Vehicle shown above
Recently, Wisconsin PVA set out on an initiative to contact all its members. Not to just perform a courtesy call which is always great to do but also to let them know that they are not in this crisis alone, that we are all facing the (COVID-19) pandemic together and if they were to need anything, they could call upon us. On one particular call, I spoke with a Phyllis Larson, she is the wife of Larry Larson of Superior WI. Phyllis informed me that Larry had passed away back in January 2020 not to the virus but of natural causes. After we spoke and we were saying our goodbyes she stopped and said you know, there is something you can help me with. She began to tell me that she would like to pass along her husband’s handicap minivan to a needy PVA member and if I could help her with that. At first, I was struck by such a kind and generous gesture and I also knew right then that I was going to take on this task and try to help her. So, I spoke with her at some length gathering additional information about Larry’s van. I left her feeling as though I’ve known Phillis for a long time, she truly is a remarkable woman.

Over the next week I spoke with several people asking for their advice. I eventually ended up at the desk of Krista Ungerleider a social worker at the SCI center in Milwaukee WI, VA. I informed her of what was being offered and asked if they could help me compile a list of possible candidates for this van. It wasn’t long before everyone was suggesting one man’s name. (Mark Makowski) Mark and his wife Dina live in Sheboygan WI, Mark has been confined to the Milwaukee hospital grounds living there now for nearly three years. This has come about because of the treatments Mark needs to undergo several times each week. Mark is not eligible for VA rides and he doesn’t have funding for all the rides he would need to undergo for all of his treatments. As a result, Mark had no choice but to remain at the hospital unable to spend time at his home anymore, a grim future for him I’d have to say. I couldn’t imagine how hard this must have been for Mark and his wife and their family.

Once I heard of Mark’s story, I was convinced we were on the right track. Now, I just needed to tie up all the loose ends. I called and spoke with Mrs. Larson again and informed her of whom I was able to find for her late husband’s van, and after hearing of the Makowski’s and their story she also knew in her heart that they were the right family as well, she wanted Mark to have Larry’s van. I’m proud to say that Mark is now spending quality time with his wife and family you might see him out and about catching up with old friends but most importantly he is home once again sleeping in his own bed, how good that must be for them. Congratulations Mark! Welcome home.

A special thanks to all of you that helped make this happen, and a very heart felt thank you to Mrs. Larson for it was her deep desire to reach out and help a fellow veteran that made this story come true.

Dale Nelson, President
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has a myriad of benefits available for eligible veterans and family members. The benefits you may qualify for depends on your service and situation, which differs from veteran to veteran. Knowing where to go for these benefits and navigating the VA system isn’t as easy as it may seem. Below are some helpful tips, information, and links which may answer many of your questions and help guide you through some of the processes.

**Eligibility for Veterans Pension**
Wartime veterans who meet certain age or disability requirements and whose income/net worth falls within a certain limit may be eligible for the Veterans Pension program. Use the following link to see if you qualify: [https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility/](https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility/).

**Eligibility for VA Disability Benefits**
You may be able to get VA disability benefits or compensation if you have a current illness or injury (known as a condition) that affects your body or mind and you meet at least one of the requirements listed below.
Both must be true. You:
- Served on active duty, active duty for training, or inactive duty training, and
- Have a disability rating for your service-connected condition

And at least one of these must be true. You:
- Got sick or injured while serving in the military—and can link this condition to your illness or injury (called an in-service disability claim), or
- Had an illness or injury before you joined the military—and serving made it worse (called a preservice disability claim), or
- Have a disability related to your active-duty service that didn’t appear until after you ended your service (called a post service disability claim)

**Presumed Disabilities**
- A chronic (long-lasting) illness that appears within one year after discharge, or
- An illness caused by contact with contaminants (toxic chemicals) or other hazardous materials, or
- An illness caused by your time spent as a prisoner of war (POW)

**Who’s covered?**
- Veterans
- Qualified dependents

Use the following link to see if you qualify: [https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/](https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/).

**VA Priority Groups**
If you are a veteran, you may be eligible for healthcare through the VA, you do not need to be service connected. VA has 8 priority groups and 7 sub priority groups, use the following link to see the eligibility criteria for healthcare through the VA and to determine which priority group and sub priority group you fall in: [https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/priority-groups/](https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/priority-groups/).

**VA Travel Pay Reimbursement**
Veterans may also be eligible for benefits through the Beneficiary Travel Program as well, use the following link to learn more: [https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/](https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-reimbursed-for-travel-pay/).
Emergency Medical Care
Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare who need to seek emergency medical care should do so immediately. You do not need prior VA authorization before calling an ambulance or going to and from an emergency department. It is very important to notify VA within 72 hours of admission to a non-VA medical facility. If you receive a bill for medical services provided by a non-VA medical facility, call the billing department. If they haven’t already, ask them to submit the bill to the nearest VA Medical Center (VAMC) for processing. Rules differ for veterans who are service-connected and those who are not. Use the following link to learn more: https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/veterans/Emergency_Care.asp#payment.

Prosthetics
Veterans who are having problems with their VA-issued prosthetic appliance(s) and wheelchair(s) should contact the following VA facilities:

Tomah VAMC
For repairs, the veteran can call (800) 872-8662, extension 61140 for the Prosthetic Department. For adjustments and replacements, they would need to talk with their primary care physician (PCP) for a consult to be entered for a new evaluation. Tomah does not have a wheelchair clinic to do repairs or minor adjustments. Some adjustments may be handled through Rehabilitation service. Tomah outsources repairs to the local communities.

Madison VAMC
Prosthetics Service at Madison VAMC does not have a wheelchair repair shop, prosthetic/ orthotic lab for fabricating or repairing artificial limbs or custom orthotics. For repairs and replacement items, the veteran must have received the item from Prosthetics Service. Veterans must contact the Prosthetics main desk telephone number at (608) 280-7146, and press option # 2 to obtain a written pre-authorization document and/or instruction on how to proceed before they can go to the private sector for repairs or a new item.

Milwaukee VAMC
For Wheelchair Repair: Call Prosthetics at (414) 384-2000, extension 42607, and press option # 2. Wheelchair technicians (Dennis and Paul) will triage the situation. If a consult is needed (required at least every 3 years to ensure the veteran is still appropriate for equipment), the wheelchair technicians will instruct or facilitate. For other prosthetic items that were issued from the VA: Call Prosthetics at 414-384-2000, extension 42607, and press option # 6. The front desk staff will transfer you to the appropriate purchasing agent, or other Prosthetics staff.
There are other options on the Phone Tree, too:
- Option # 1 – Status of eyeglasses
- Option # 2 – Wheelchair and scooter repair
- Option # 3 – CPAP – questions about use, care, fitting
- Option # 4 – CPAP supplies
- Option # 5 – Home Oxygen or Nebulizer
- Option # 6 – Speak to the front desk to direct call

As a Service Officer, my job is to be knowledgeable regarding all benefits concerning the VA. If you have any questions regarding the information in this article, please feel free to contact me.

Eric Gonzales, National Service Officer
SAVE THE DATE

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND BANQUET
SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR AN INVITATION AND MORE DETAILS
Last fall I had the opportunity to go on a guided deer hunt with William “Hop” Kohaska in Eagle River Wisconsin. It was definitely the best hunting experience I’ve ever had. We saw lots of deer and other wildlife, had some great comradery, and I went home with a cooler full of venison and a trophy for the wall.

After talking with Hop several times on the phone to work out details of times and location for the hunt, I drove up to Eagle River on a Friday in September for an early hunt. When I got there, I got a quick tour of his home on the lake then loaded on the side by side for the evening hunt. The stand was on the ground, well concealed, and easily accessible. Everything was perfect other than it being over 70 degrees. I saw five deer that night including a fork horn, but was waiting for something bigger.

The following morning, I met Hop before first light and returned to the stand. The heat was making the hunt difficult, but I did see a couple of does and a nice cove of ruffed grouse. The rest of the weekend went much the same so we made plans for me to return in 3 weeks to hunt again.

If you are interested in going on hunt this fall, contact William “Hop” Kohaska at (773) 552-8182. He will work out the dates that are best for you. Remember, Hop provides the hunt transportation, lodging and meals are on your own.

Derrick Trentin
**SPINAL CORD INJURY SERVICE INFORMATION**

These resources are available statewide, to all qualified Wisconsin residents. Please call 414-384-2000 or 888-469-6614 and the extension listed below for services.

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**Wisconsin VAMC**

- **Iron Mountain**: Debra Pate 906-774-3300 ext. 31378
- **Madison**: Kurt Brunner 608-256-1901 ext. 11960
- **Tomah**: Kristin Holloway 608-372-3971 ext. 61548

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