

ROLL WITH US

JANUARY - FEBRUARY - MARCH 2025

New Year, New Goals: Achieve Your Best Self with PVA-WI's Support Programs

As we bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new one, it's the perfect time to set fresh goals and strive for personal growth. Whether you're aiming to improve your fitness, enhance your financial well-being, or find support from peers, PVA-WI is here to help you every step of the way. Our programs are designed to empower you to achieve your best self in 2025.

Fitness Goals

Starting the new year with a commitment to fitness can have profound benefits for both your physical and mental health. PVA-WI is excited to announce the launch of the **InvestFit Program**, which supports our members by partially covering the cost of exercise equipment, making it easier to stay active and healthy. Whether you're interested in adaptive sit-skis, exercise bikes, or other equipment, we are here to help you on your fitness journey.

- **Eligibility:** PVA-WI will contribute to the purchase of one piece of exercise equipment with a minimum value of \$200 for full members.
- **Approval:** The equipment must receive prior approval from the Milwaukee VA's Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy (PT/OT) department.
- **Financial Support:** PVA-WI will cover up to 50% of the cost, with a maximum contribution of \$500.

Kickstart your fitness journey and achieve your health goals with our support. **View Page 5** for further information, including step-by-step directions, necessary forms, and where to direct questions.

Please view more of PVA-WI's support programs on page 2!

NEW YEAR
NEW GOALS

 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
 **Military
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear PVA-WI Community,

As we welcome 2025, I want to take a moment to reflect on our shared journey and express my deepest gratitude for your continued trust in our organization. Your engagement and support have been the cornerstone of our success throughout 2024.

Looking ahead, we're more committed than ever to standing by your side and helping you achieve your goals. We understand that each new year brings both opportunities and challenges, and we're here to support you every step of the way. Our team is already working on exciting new initiatives and enhancements to our services that will provide you with even more value in the coming year.

We've learned so much from listening to your needs and feedback, and this will continue to guide our direction in 2025. Whether you need assistance navigating healthcare resources, accessing adaptive equipment, or connecting with fellow veterans, we're dedicated to providing the support and services you need to enhance your quality of life and independence.

- The strength of our community lies in its members – in your dedication, your innovative spirit, and your
- willingness to support one another. As we step into 2025, I'm filled with optimism about what we can
- achieve together.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. Thank you for being an essential part of our community.

Warm regards,
Todd Drazy, Board President

WHO WE ARE

Officers

President: Todd Drazy
Vice President/GRD: Scott Griffith
Secretary: Gary Stott
Immediate Past President: Ken Ness

National Director

Scott Griffith

Directors

Richard "Rick" Buth
Peter "Pete" Carrao
Troy Kurczek
Michael Thomas
Angela Walker

Recreation Therapy

Erinn Kulba
Sam Gracz

Staff

Amera Schaefer: Executive Director
Brenna Frey: Advancement & Engagement
Coordinator

National SVC Office

Brenda Stencil
Call: 414-902-5655

Rehab Counselor

Doug Green MS, CRC

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Friday, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Saturday & Sunday Closed
750 N Lincoln Memorial Drive, Suite 422
Milwaukee, WI 53202
414-328-8910

Financial Goals

Financial empowerment is crucial for a secure and stable future. Through a partnership with Marine Credit Union, PVA-WI offers a monthly online webinar series focused on financial empowerment. Each session covers a different set of topics, providing you with valuable insights and practical tools to manage your finances effectively.

Join our webinars to enhance your financial well-being and take control of your financial future. **View page 16** for more information.



Peer Support Goals

Finding support from peers who understand your experiences can be incredibly beneficial. PVA-WI offers various peer support programs to help you connect with others and share your journey.

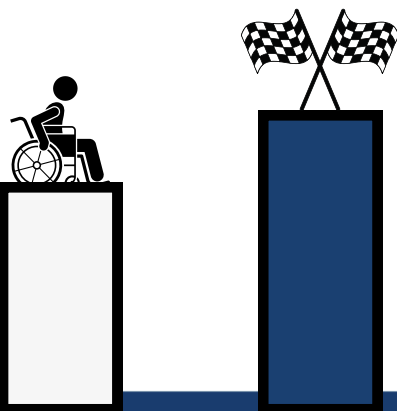
- **MS Chill and Chats:** Join Mark Rose, PVA-WI's MS point of contact, and other Veterans with MS for monthly Chill and Chat sessions. These online sessions provide a relaxed environment to share experiences, offer support, and build friendships.
- **Women Vets Reconnect:** Take a break and reconnect with Angela Walker, PVA-WI's women's point of contact, and other fellow women Veterans who genuinely understand your experiences. Women Vets Reconnect monthly online meetings are your time to relax, share, and support each other in a welcoming and understanding environment.

By participating in our peer support programs, you can build a strong network of friends and allies who are there to support you. **View page 16** for more information.

We are Here to Support YOU

As you set your new year goals, remember that PVA-WI is here to support you in every way. Whether you're focusing on fitness, financial stability, or finding peer support, our programs are designed to help you succeed. Embrace the new year with confidence and let us help you achieve your best self in 2025!

For more information about our programs and how to get involved, please visit our website, www.wisconsinpva.org, call (414) 328-8910, or email info@wisconsinpva.org.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear PVA-WI Community,

The start of a new year is the perfect time to thank to each of you – our dedicated volunteers, generous supporters, and valued members – who make our mission possible. Your commitment to supporting PVA-WI has made 2024 a year of meaningful impact.

I invite you to review our annual report to see the impact we've achieved together. As we move into 2025, please remember we're here to support you – whether you need assistance, want to volunteer, or are looking to make a difference in veterans' lives. Don't hesitate to reach out so we can better serve you.

Thank you for being part of our PVA-WI family. I look forward to working together in the year ahead.

Amera Schaefer, Executive Director

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP

Members: 314

New Members:

Bruce M. Selan, Leslie A. Derr, Jamira Jagers, Daniel P. O'Sullivan,
Leonard T. Alt, William H. Rowe, III, Thomas A. Traurig, Toby J.
McGuire, Ronald T. Sims, & Richard L. Koch

Associate Members: 183

Angelo Perez

Final Bugle:

James C. Dawson, Robert F. Meingast, Wolfgang Wagener, Andrew
C. Dietrich, Robert N. Speck, Joseph F. Zalenski, Andy Weyker, Phil
Rosenberg

Hello PVA-WI Members,

A donor has donated a crypt to us located at West Lawn Memorial Park in Racine, WI.

If you are interested or have any questions please email info@wisconsinpva.org or call 414-328-8910.



SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY



PVA-WI has a scholarship program for our members and their families. Eligibility is open to all PVA-WI members, their spouse, their children, and their grandchildren. This scholarship opportunity is not open to associate members or their dependents.

Application submission guidelines:

1. Proof of enrollment in an accredited college, university, or technical school
2. Billing statement for the upcoming school year that includes the amount owed
3. Submit an essay between 500-600 words describing how you have been impacted by a veteran living with a spinal cord injury or disease
4. Share any civic engagement activity you have performed
5. Must have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above; please submit your most recent transcript showing grades and GPA

The application is available on our website under policies; click on the policy titled PVA-WI Scholarship for Members/Dependents or scan the QR code. These applications will be reviewed year-round on the first of every month. If you have any questions, please email aschaefer@wisconsinpva.org.

Scan the QR code to start your scholarship application today!



Upcoming Events



Please visit our website www.wisconsinpva.org for more events and information! New events are continuously added!







Paralyzed Veterans Charity PHEASANT HUNT

JOIN US ON JANUARY 04!

Join us for the annual Paralyzed Veterans Charity Pheasant Hunt! This event is a great opportunity to come together for a worthy cause.

Event Details:

- Cost:** \$25 per bird, 2 birds per hunter minimum. Additional birds can be added by request prior to Jan. 4th.
- Sign-Up:** We need to know the total number of birds at sign-up. A credit card number must be given at sign-up to hold your birds.
- Group Formation:** Reach out to others to form a group. If you can't, we'll place you with another group.
- Guides:** Guides with dogs will be available. Please tip your guides as they are volunteers.
- Equipment:** Must have your own shotgun and ammo (Number 5 shot or less). Blaze orange is required for the upper half of your body, and a blaze hat is highly recommended.
- Bird Cleaning:** Bird cleaning services will be available. Please tip the bird cleaners.

Date: Jan 04, 2025
Check-In: 7:00 - 7:45 am
Safety Briefing: 7:45am
Hunt: 8:00am - 11:00am
Lunch: 11:30am
Raffles: Following Lunch

Registration/Questions

Contact Jerry Costabile
 (262) 515-3951
Jlc.outdoors2fish@gmail.com

Meet us at the McCullom Lake Hunt Club
 10603 Okeson Rd., Hebron, IL 60034

South East Wisconsin Veteran Suicide Prevention Task Force Presents

The 3rd Annual

FROST Fest!

JANUARY 25, 2025
 1200 TO 1500

War Memorial Center
 750 N Lincoln Memorial Dr.
 Milwaukee, WI 53202

FREE FAMILY FUN!
 Veteran Resources
 Veteran Owned Retail Vendors
 Special Entertainment
 Door Prizes
 Holiday Activities for the kids
 Free Parking with Military ID
 (\$10 for Non-Military)

For more information contact
 Dona Drew at Dona.Drew@va.gov

Sign Up using the QR code or go to: <https://bit.ly/FrostFest2025>





PVA-WI ANNUAL AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT

Join PVA-WI for an exciting weekend of precision and camaraderie at Shooter's Sports Center! Whether you're a seasoned marksman or a beginner, this event is for you!

EVENT DETAILS

- March 21 - March 22, 2025
 FRI Practice, SAT Competition
- March 21 at 10:00 AM
 March 22 at 12:00 PM
- Shooter's Sports Center
 4900 6 Mile Rd, Racine, WI 53402

REGISTER NOW

Phone Number
 (414) 328-8910

Website
www.wisconsinpva.org





REGISTRATION FEE

\$235 All Events
\$80 Each Event

Ammo included!

*Price includes lunch & dinner on Saturday / Lunch on Sunday
 *Optional military-style biscuits & gravy Sunday breakfast - \$10

Phil Rosenberg Memorial Green Bay Trap Shoot Tournament

FRI - SAT - SUN AT 1000
JUNE 27-29, 2025

Brown County Sportsmen's Club
 1711 W Deerfield Ave, Green Bay, WI 54313

Website
www.wisconsinpva.org
 Phone
 (414) 328-8910

SHOOT & WIN!

Grand Prize - \$400 Cabella's Gift Card
 1st Place - \$100 Cabella's Gift Card
 2nd Place - \$50 Cabella's Gift Card

Hotel Reservations:

Oneida Casino Hotel
 2040 Airport Dr., Green Bay, WI 54313
 Phone: (920) 494-7300
Must reserve room by May 17, 2025

Register Now!

INVESTFIT: GET STARTED

How to Get Started:

1. **Choose Your Equipment:** Select a piece of exercise equipment that meets your fitness needs.
2. **Seek Recommendation:** Get approval from the Milwaukee VA's PT/OT department.
3. **Complete Financial Request Form → :** Complete the financial request form and submit it to PVA-WI via mail or email.
4. **Wait for PVA-WI Approval:** The wait for approval of your financial request form will take approximately 1 week. You will receive this decision through email.
5. **Purchase the Equipment:** Purchase the equipment. (Make sure to keep your receipt!)
6. **Complete Expense Report → :** Complete the expense report and submit it to PVA-WI via mail or email. (Purchase receipt required).
7. **Reimbursement:** Once all of the required documents have been submitted and approved, please allow 30 days for processing. Your reimbursement will be delivered via direct deposit.

Financial Request Form



SCAN ME

Expense Report

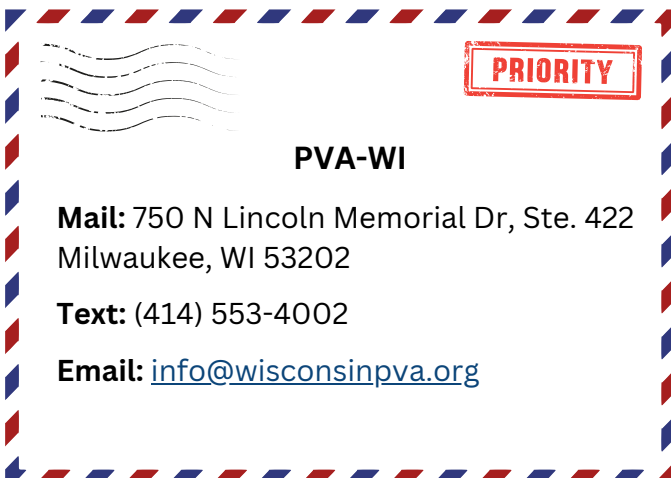
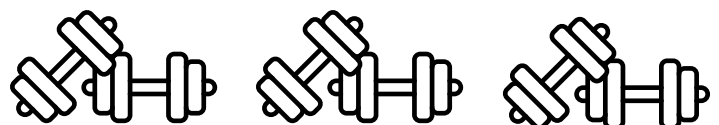


SCAN ME

← **Where to Submit Your Documents:**
Submit your documents to PVA-WI via mail, email, or text.

Questions?

Call (414) 328-8910 or email
info@wisconsinpva.org



PVA-WI

Mail: 750 N Lincoln Memorial Dr, Ste. 422
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Text: (414) 553-4002

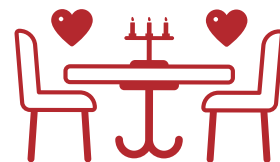
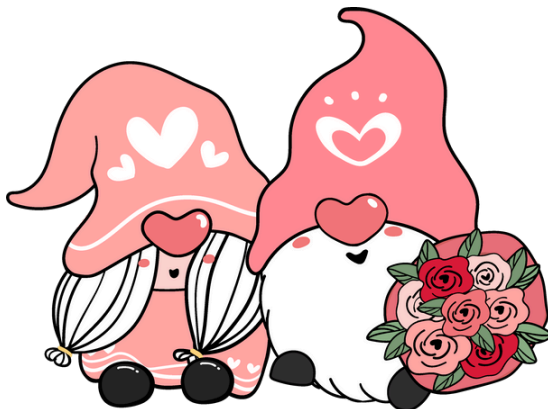
Email: info@wisconsinpva.org

Membership Entertainment Policy

PVA-WI Members make sure you use this benefit!

Treat your spouse, a friend, or your caregiver to a movie, dinner, concert, or any other form of entertainment. This benefit can be used on Valentine's Day, a birthday, or any other day of the week! You are entitled to this reimbursement two times per year.

All you need to do is GO HAVE SOME FUN and send in your receipt to the WI Chapter!



Membership entertainment benefits are available to full PVA-WI members who meet certain criteria. If you are a member in good standing you can request financial assistance to attend an entertainment event. Through this program, we are encouraging members to get out in their communities and be involved. You can request a \$100 stipend bi-annually to attend an event of your choosing [i.e., dinner, movie, concert, sports event, etc.].

To participate in this program, you must submit a written request for the funds, with an explanation of how they will be used [i.e., transportation, attendants, tickets, etc.] 30 days prior to the event. Upon review and approval of the membership committee, a check [not to exceed \$100.00] will be issued. After attending the event you must submit all receipts associated with your outing, return any unused funds, and submit a short report of the event you attended. A picture of you and how you used the funds would be appreciated as well. These items must be submitted within 30 days of the outing. Feel free to use the form below.

Entertainment forms also appear on our website, www.wisconsinpva.org, and they are available by contacting the PVA WI Chapter Office at (414) 328-8910.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

Date of Event _____ Amount Requested \$ _____

How funds will be used _____

I hereby pledge to deliver all receipts to the PVA-WI Chapter office within 30 days of the completion of the event. I understand if I do not complete this requirement, I will not be eligible for future financial assistance from the PVA-WI Chapter until I complete the requirements, submit them, and I am approved.

Member Signature _____

New Year, New Website Updates!

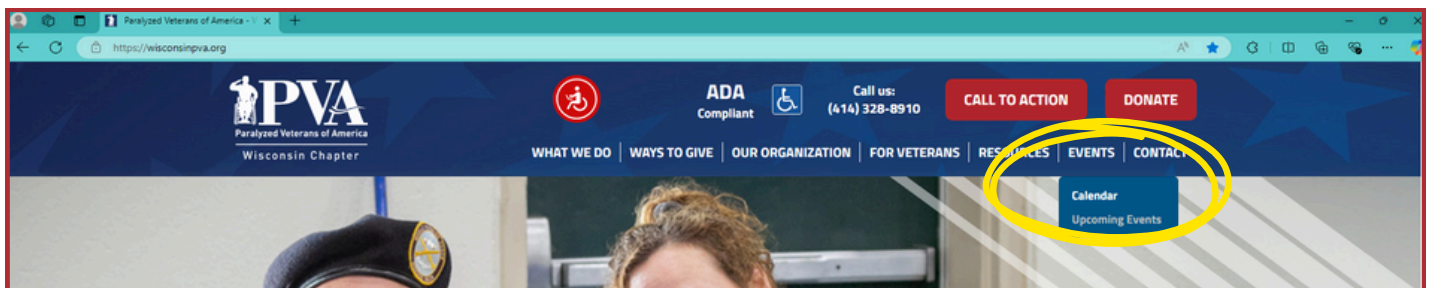
We're excited to announce that PVA-WI's website has been revamped just in time for the new year! Explore our updated site, which now includes:

- **Upcoming Events Page:** Easily register for events and stay informed.
- **New Resources:** Find new information on MS, ALS, and sexual health after SCI on our website and YouTube channel.
- **Facebook Feed:** View our latest Facebook updates directly on our website!

Visit PVA-WI's website and discover all the new features today at www.wisconsinpva.org!

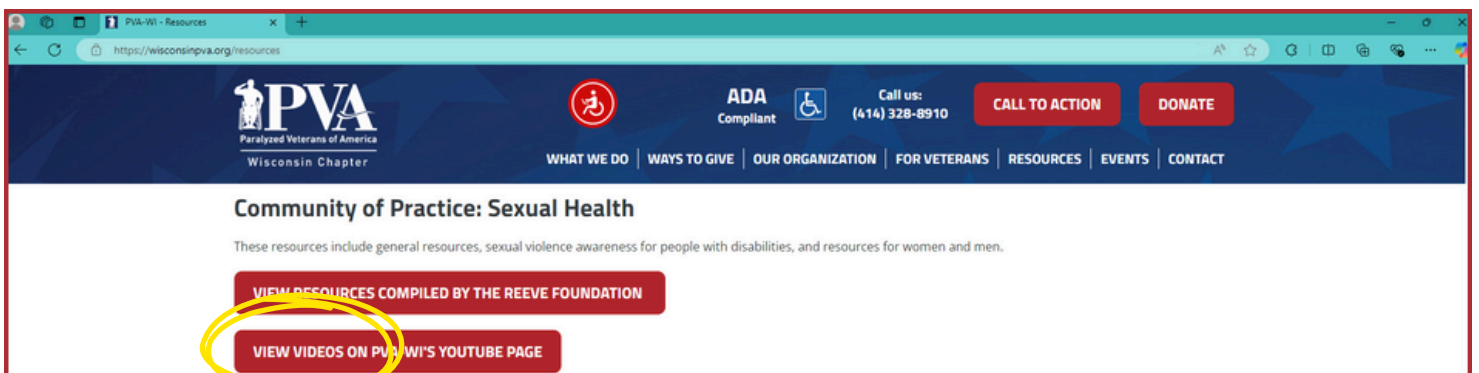
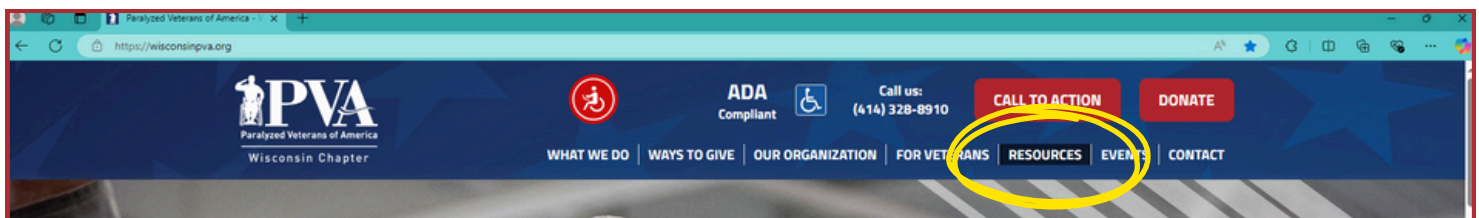
Upcoming Events Page

Easily register for upcoming events and stay informed! Visit our website, select the “Events” tab at the top left of the screen, and select “Upcoming Events” in the drop-down menu.



New Resources

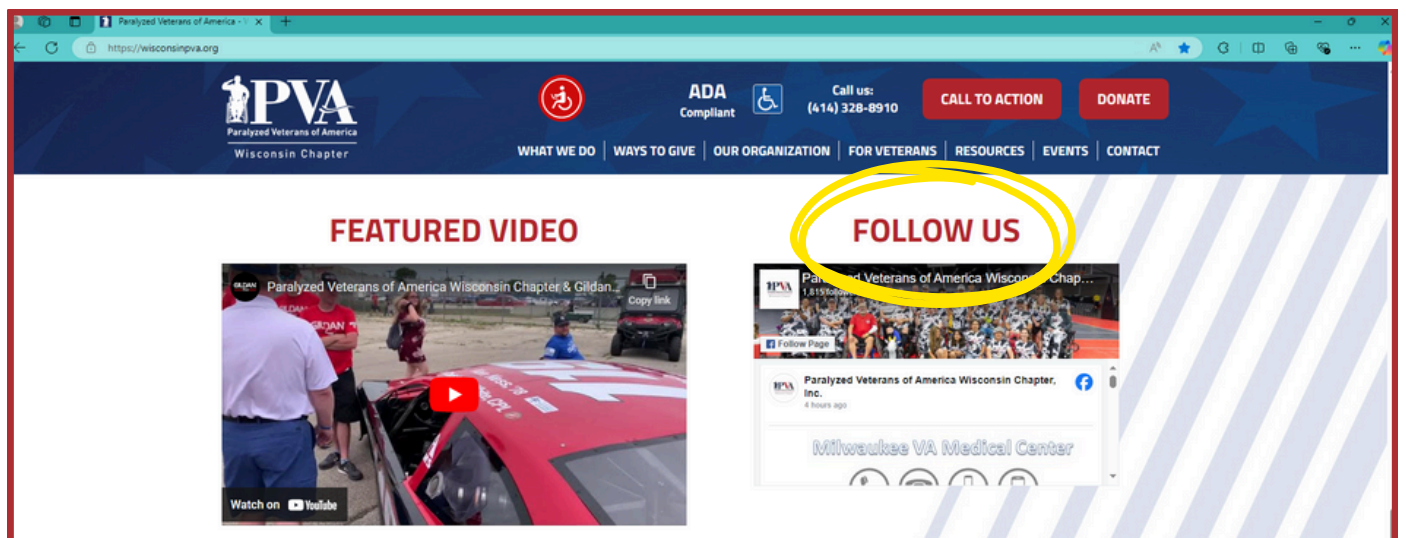
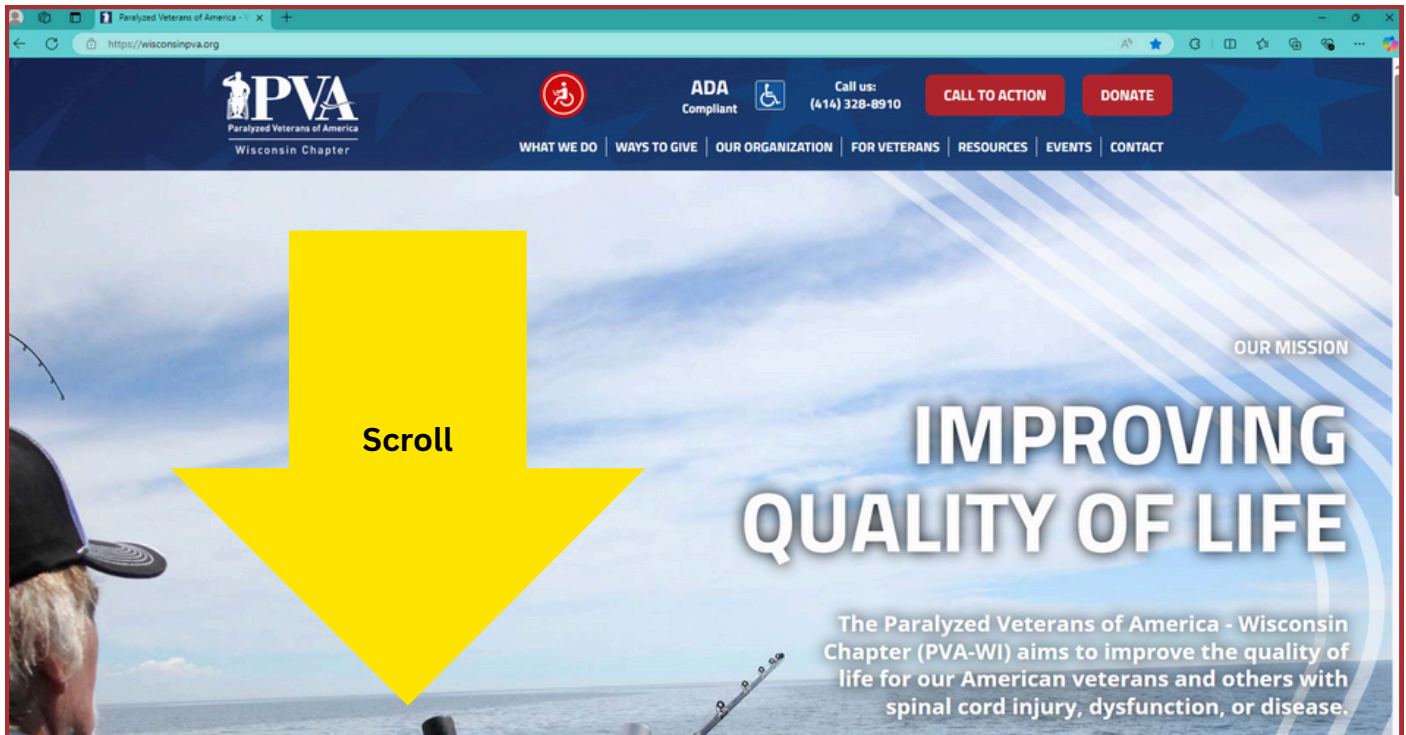
Did you know that PVA-WI has a YouTube channel featuring a wide array of information, including a video series about sex, love, and intimacy after SCI? Access this video series now! Visit our website, select the “Resources” tab at the top left of the screen, scroll to the bottom of the page until you reach “Community of Practice: Sexual Health,” click the “VIEW VIDEOS ON PVA-WI’S YOUTUBE PAGE” button, and enjoy watching!



New Year, New Website Updates!

Facebook Page

View our most recent Facebook posts and easily access our Facebook page directly from our website! Scroll to the bottom of the landing page until you see the “Follow Us” section.



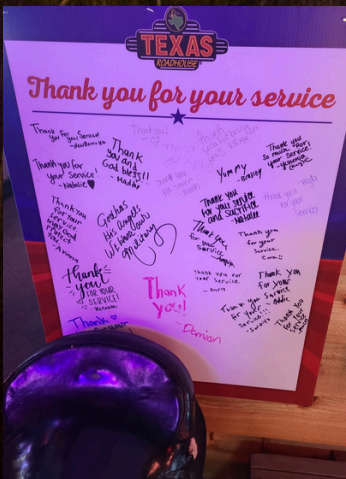
Explore our website more
at www.wisconsinpva.org!

PVA-WI at Work

MVETs Post 911 presented PVA-WI with a check from their bowling fundraiser. We want to thank everyone for their support!




TEXAS ROADHOUSE – NEW BERLIN FUNDRAISER





Want To Improve **Your Bowel Function?**



Recently published research reveals between 50 and 80% of participants reported improvements in bowel function and/or management after walking in an exoskeleton*

Did you know Paralyzed US Veterans May be Eligible for a ReWalk Personal Exoskeleton?

Contact ReWalk for more Information:
rewalk.com/contact or 508.251.1154 option 2

*Chun A, et al. Changes in bowel function following exoskeletal-assisted walking in persons with spinal cord injury: an observational pilot study. Spinal Cord. 2020;58(4):459-466.

Adaptive Water Skiing Opportunities

Experience the Thrill of Adaptive Water Skiing!

Through a wonderful partnership between the River City Waterski Show Team in La Crosse, WI, and the North American Squirrel Association (Nasa), physically and cognitively challenged youth and adults are offered the opportunity to enjoy the exhilaration of water skiing!

Adaptive Equipment for Everyone

Participants use adaptive sit-skis that cater to various heights, sizes, and ability levels. Skiers can opt for the assistance of side skiers or ski independently using “outriggers” attached to the sit-ski. For

- those eager to try traditional water skiing,
- they have also assisted some skiers in
- getting up on two skis using a boom alongside the boat.



Summer Clinics

Two clinics are hosted each summer, typically in June and August. “The joy and smiles on the faces of the skiers are truly heartwarming—they absolutely LOVE it!”

Join Now!

To find out about upcoming clinic dates, please visit the River City Waterski Show Team’s Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1815028785449986> or search Facebook for “Adaptive Water Skiing with River City.”

You can also **contact Jody Lyon** at lyonski1@gmail.com to inquire about upcoming dates and to be added to their email list for announcements.

For more information and registration details, visit the River City Waterski Show Team’s website at <http://rivercitywaterski.com/adaptive-waterskiing/>.

Additional Adaptive Sports Resources

- Nasa offers over 20 adaptive activities for Veterans to participate in! Find an activity now by visiting <https://www.nasasquirrel.org/waterskiing.php>.
- USA Water Ski & Wake Sports also offers Veterans Adaptive Learn to Ski Clinics across the United States! Visit <https://www.sharelifeonthewater.com/adaptivelearntoski.html> to find one near you.

Activity



A Message from PVA-WI Cryptogram Puzzle



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
17	11	6	2	8	26	18	24	23	20	16	15	10	12	4	25	1	19	5	9	3	22	14	21	7	13

Decode the message from PVA-WI.

Each letter in the phrase below has been replaced with a number.

Try to decode the message.

10 17 7 9 24 23 5 7 8 17 19 11 19 23 12 18

12 8 14 24 17 25 25 23 12 8 5 5 , 12 8 14

18 4 17 15 5 , 12 8 14

17 6 24 23 8 22 8 10 8 12 9 5 , 17 12 2 17

15 4 9 4 26 12 8 14

23 12 5 25 23 19 17 9 23 4 12 5 23 12 7 4 3 19

15 23 26 8

SEE ANSWER AT THE BOTTOM OF
PAGE 23



National Service Officer (NSO) Report

VA Health Benefits and Medicare

By Brenda Stencil, National Service Officer

Veterans approaching age 65 are likely to be inundated with mail and phone calls from Medicare advising them of their eligibility to enroll in Medicare. Many veterans may just set aside the initial enrollment package and other mail to review at a later date, however, it is important to start the conversation and find out more information because Medicare can be confusing and you will be making a decision that may impact your future.

Many veterans receive all their healthcare at a VA Medical Facility. Do they really need to apply for Medicare because the VA takes care of them? Unfortunately, a standard response that fits all veterans does not exist. Each veteran has unique experiences, backgrounds, perspectives and personal life circumstances, making no two veterans exactly alike. For instance, a single veteran who is receiving VA compensation, social security, and is categorized Priority 1 has different healthcare needs than a married veteran with children who is receiving VA pension. Some veterans may have good reason to enroll in Medicare, however, the most important point is to become educated on your health care and talk to an experienced insurance broker in order to make an informed decision.

Understanding Medicare

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people who are age 65 or older, people under age 65 with certain disabilities, and people of any age with end-stage renal disease, Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS), or mesothelioma. Medicare offers two options - Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage.

Original Medicare. Original Medicare consists of two main parts-Part A and Part B. Part C, Part D, and Medigap are defined below.

Part A is hospital insurance and covers services that are related to inpatient services. Most veterans already paid for Part A with payroll deductions during their working life. If you are drawing social security, you will be auto-enrolled in Medicare Part A and a Medicare card will be mailed to you. Watch the mail for your Medicare card a few months prior to your 65th birthday.

Part B is a medical insurance coverage that provides services related to outpatient and preventative care. In general, it will cover doctor visits, diagnostic tests to prevent illness, skilled nursing and all services that are considered medically necessary.

Article continued on next page...

Part B charges a monthly premium (\$185.00 for 2025) and if you are drawing social security, the premium will be deducted from your social security. If you are not drawing social security, you will receive a bill in the mail. Below are some advantages and disadvantages:

- + You can use any doctor or hospital across the Nation that takes Medicare
- + Prior authorization and referrals are not typically required
- + You can shop and buy supplemental coverage to help with out-of-pocket costs
- No out-of-pocket cost maximum limits
- No extra benefits (vision, hearing, or dental coverage)

Medicare Advantage Plan- Part C. This is a Medicare-approved plan from a private health insurance company that offers an alternative to Original Medical care. Below are some advantages and disadvantages:

- + Don't pay any costs for covered care for the plan year
- + The Medicare Advantage Plans can include extra benefits like prescription drug coverage, dental, hearing, and vision coverage and gym memberships
- Restricted to in-network care
- Requires pre-authorizations and specialist referrals for many types of care

Medicare Part D is prescription drug coverage. VA drug coverage is considered creditable prescription drug coverage which means the coverage is at least as good as what Medicare drug plans provide. A veteran doesn't generally need to enroll in Medicare Part D. VA benefits and Part D do not work together and you can't use both types of coverage for the same drug at the same time.

Medigap is also known as Medicare supplement insurance. A Medicare supplement plan can help cover out-of-pocket costs associated with Medicare, like deductibles and copayments, which are not covered by VA benefits when using Medicare for non-VA care.

Food for Thought

- Enrolling in both VA Health Care and Medicare will give you more flexibility in healthcare access.
- You may be subject to penalties if you delay Medicare Part B enrollment. VA coverage does not count as credible coverage to delay Medicare part B lifetime penalties.
- Federal funding uncertainties may impact VA health benefits in the future. Benefit changes could impact the priority groups; veterans in higher priority groups are given preference (Priority group 1 is the highest).
- Appointment waiting times may be faster using Medicare than the VA.

Article continued on next page...

NSO Report Continued

- Medicare may provide coverage for medical prescriptions the VA may not have.
- The nearest VA facility isn't convenient to you but a Medicare-certified facility may be closer to you.

TRICARE and CHAMPVA

There are two main health programs for military and veterans-TRICARE and the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA).

TRICARE is a health care program for active duty and retired service members, their families, and their survivors. If you become eligible for TRICARE benefits, you are no longer eligible for CHAMPVA. A veteran must have Medicare Part B to keep TRICARE coverage. When a veteran becomes eligible for Medicare Parts A and B, the veteran will automatically receive TRICARE for Life coverage.

CHAMPVA is a health care program for spouses, dependents, and survivors. If you're eligible for Medicare, you must have Medicare Parts A and B to get or keep CHAMPVA benefits.

- Do veterans need Medicare? The answer remains with you. There are advantages to enrolling in Medicare even if you have VA benefits. Medicare provides additional protection. With Medicare you have more freedom to choose how you want your health portfolio to look. Educate yourself to make the right decisions for you and/or your family.

Resources:

Medicare: If you would like to find healthcare providers and suppliers in your area that participate in Medicare or plans offered in your area, visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

Social Security Administration (SSA): If you have questions about Medicare Part A and Part B enrollment, [visit SSA.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).

Social Security Administration (SSA): If you have questions about Medicare Part A and Part B enrollment, [visit SSA.gov](https://www.ssa.gov).

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP): For free, one-on-one help choosing a plan, reviewing coverage, understanding costs, and more, [find your local SHIP](#).

TRICARE

<https://www.tricare.mil/>

CHAMPVA

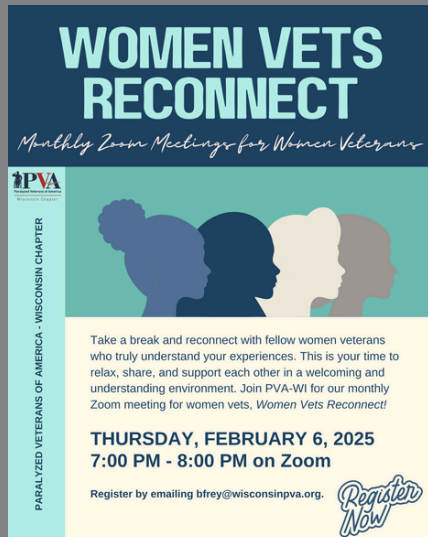
Phone: 800-733-8387

Hours: 8:05 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET Monday through Friday

What if you Need Help?

Contact your National Service Officer, Brenda Stencil at (414) 902-5655 or email brendas@pva.org.

Upcoming PVA-WI Webinars



WOMEN VETS RECONNECT
Monthly Zoom Meetings for Women Veterans

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA - WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Take a break and reconnect with fellow women veterans who truly understand your experiences. This is your time to relax, share, and support each other in a welcoming and understanding environment. Join PVA-WI for our monthly Zoom meeting for women vets, *Women Vets Reconnect*!

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2025
7:00 PM - 8:00 PM on Zoom

Register by emailing bfrey@wisconsinpva.org. *Register Now*

Women Vets Reconnect

Take a break and reconnect with fellow women Veterans who truly understand your experiences. This is your time to relax, share, and support each other in a welcoming and understanding environment. Join PVA-WI for our monthly Zoom meeting for women Veterans, *Women Vets Reconnect*!

Meeting Details

- Thur, Feb 06
- Thur, Mar 06
- 7:00 - 8:00 PM
- Zoom

Register by emailing bfrey@wisconsinpva.org.

Financial Empowerment Webinar Series

Meeting Details

- Thur, Feb 20
- 3:00 - 4:00 PM
- Zoom

View the monthly Sports and Rec email for more dates.

PVA-WI has partnered with the Marine Credit Union to host a monthly online webinar series focused on financial empowerment. Each session covers a different set of topics, providing you with valuable insights and practical tools to improve your financial well-being.

Register at <https://forms.office.com/r/t6nFq6nWtX?origin=lpLink>



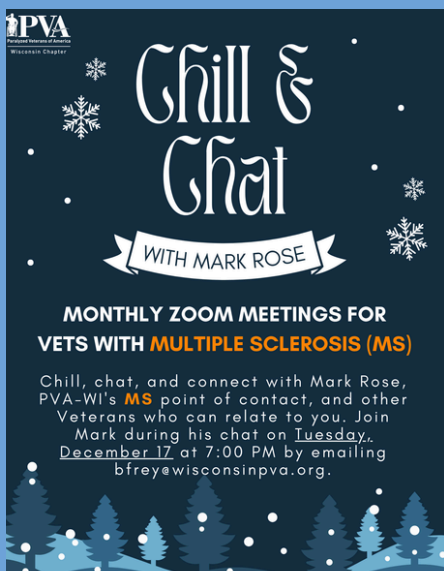
MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES
FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT
In partnership with **MARINE CREDIT UNION**

Join our 2nd session on Thursday, February 20 at 3:00 PM!

Session 2 Topics:

- How to identify and replace problematic money habits picked up from past experiences
- Creating realistic spending and saving rules based on your money personality type
- Setting up systems and routines that support your financial goals while respecting your triggers
- Establishing clear boundaries around lending money, discussing finances, or handling shared expenses
- Developing healthy coping mechanisms for financial stress that don't involve harmful spending or avoidance

[Register Here](#)



Chill & Chat
WITH MARK ROSE

MONTHLY ZOOM MEETINGS FOR VETS WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS (MS)

Chill, chat, and connect with Mark Rose, PVA-WI's **MS** point of contact, and other Veterans who can relate to you. Join Mark during his chat on **Tuesday, December 17 at 7:00 PM** by emailing bfrey@wisconsinpva.org.

Chill & Chat with Mark Rose

Chill, chat, and connect with PVA-WI's MS point of contact, Mark Rose, and fellow Veterans who understand what you're going through. Join Mark for his monthly chill and chat sessions for Veterans with MS, held every month on Zoom from 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM.

Meeting Details

- Tue, Jan 21
- Tue, Feb 18
- Tue, Mar 18
- 7:00 - 8:00 PM
- Zoom

Register by emailing bfrey@wisconsinpva.org.

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Announcements

2025 COLA ANNOUNCED FOR VETERANS AND SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

The Social Security Administration (SSA) announced on October 10, 2024, that Social Security benefits will see a **2.5% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) starting in 2025**. Additionally, VA disability checks will also increase next year. For Veterans with a 10% disability rating, checks will rise by approximately \$4.28 per month, while those rated at 100% without dependents will see an increase of about \$93.45 per month.



To view the updated 2025 VA disability pay rates, please visit

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/10/10/here-2025-pay-raise-disabled-veterans-and-military-retirees.html>



PREPARE FOR VA SIGN IN-CHANGES IN 2025



Veterans, you will soon need a [Login.gov](https://login.gov) or [ID.me](https://id.me) account to sign in to the VA and manage your benefits and health care online. Scan the QR code or create your account now at: www.va.gov/sign-in-changes

Following **January 31, 2025**, access to VA.gov, VA mobile apps, and other VA online services will no longer be possible using a My HealtheVet user ID and password. Additionally, after **September 30, 2025**, signing in with a DS Logon username and password will also be discontinued.



PVA-WI 2024 Annual Report



Take a peek at our latest annual report! We've got all the details about our performance and accomplishments from the past year ready for you to explore on our website. Whether you're interested in our financial growth, key initiatives, or what's on the horizon, you'll find it all there in one comprehensive report.

<https://wisconsinpva.org/financials>



Employment and Multiple Sclerosis

As a complex and unpredictable disease, multiple sclerosis can have varying effects on a person's ability to work. However, disease-modifying therapies, new technologies, better symptom management, legal employment protections and community resources can all help you remain in the workforce. When you're living with MS, it is still possible to develop and achieve your employment goals. Having the right information and creating a plan will make all the difference. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is here to work with you as you navigate your employment options. We have resources for your employment toolkit. ***This information was provided by the National MS Society.***



Disclosure Decisions

This page will help you decide if, when and how to tell people at work about your diagnosis.



Accommodations

On this page, you'll find info about requesting accommodations at work, examples of reasonable accommodations and more.



Career Options

This page offers advice for managing your career plan and employment decisions while living with MS.



Connect and Serve Program

In partnership with Lou Gehrig's Fraternity, Phi Delta Theta, Live Like Lou has hundreds of volunteers throughout North America who have registered to serve ALS families in their community. When your ALS family registers with the Live Like Lou Foundation, the organization will recruit a Phi Delta Theta volunteer near your home. Once matched with a volunteer, the two of you take it from there!

There is no fee or obligation from ALS families in exchange for this service, and families may cancel the arrangement at any time.

To register, scan the QR code or visit <https://www.livelikelou.org/als-families>.

This information was provided by the Live Like Lou Foundation.

Assistance Includes:

- Spring cleaning
- Yard work
- Outdoor repairs
- Painting
- Cleaning windows
- Hanging holiday lights
- and more!



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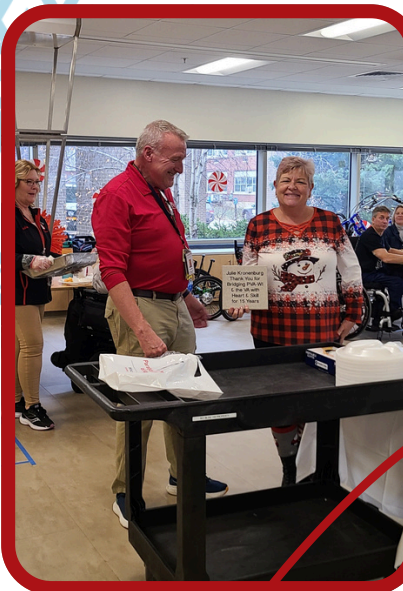


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PVA-WI Holiday Party



In honor of her retirement, Julie Kronenberg was gifted with a brick to be placed on the Milwaukee VA SCI wall, recognizing her 15 years of dedication to bridging the gap between PVA-WI and the VA (pictured left). Scott Griffith presented the Volunteer Award to Dan Kunda on behalf of PVA-WI (pictured right).



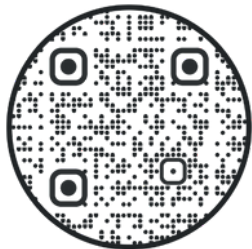
Ekso Indego® Gets Veterans Walking Again

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

Ekso Indego Personal

What is the Ekso Indego?

Ekso Indego is an FDA-cleared, powered exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries (level T3-L5) to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.



Scan with your phone for more information on how you could receive your own Ekso Indego Personal.

Getting Veterans with SCI Back on Their Feet

A recently revised VA policy allows Ekso Indego to be issued to qualified veterans at no cost.*

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- Improve your cardio & bone density
- Enjoy eye-level conversations again



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www.eksobionics.com/request-information/



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Thank You's

Dear PVA-WI Scholarship Committee,

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for awarding me the \$1,000 scholarship. It is an incredible honor to be selected as a recipient, and I am truly grateful for your generosity and support. This scholarship will have a significant impact on my educational journey, helping me to focus on my studies and pursue my academic goals with less financial burden.

As the child of a veteran, I am particularly proud to receive this award from an organization that does so much to support veterans and their families. Your commitment to assisting students like me means a great deal, and I'm inspired by your dedication to honoring those who have served.

Thank you once again for your generosity and for investing in my future. I am excited to make the most of this opportunity and continue striving for success in my educational and personal endeavors.

Sincerely,

Corina Bodnar
Racine, WI

A Message from PVA-WI Cryptogram Puzzle Answer:

**MAY THIS YEAR BRING NEW HAPPINESS, NEW GOALS, NEW
ACHIEVEMENTS, AND A LOT OF NEW INSPIRATIONS IN YOUR LIFE**



Dear PVA, Amera, and Scott,

Thank you, this is an awesome blessing more than you could know! I can now join my family and take my dogs on hikes and get in the actual woods off the beaten path!!

I can now plow my driveway and also dig us out after they plow much easier than I would do with my manual wheelchair and a shovel! I also help my neighbors out and I got to put the plow to good use the Thursday before Thanksgiving and I was amazed how fast I could dig us out from the plow. I also went and helped my neighbor who I found out is really not doing good and this action track chair with the plow ended up being a HUGE blessing to them as well!!

Sincerely & Many Thanks & So much Joy,

*Tina Leet
AD3 USN RET*

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Sincerely,

Corina Bodnar
Racine, WI

A Message from PVA-WI Cryptogram Puzzle Answer:

**MAY THIS YEAR BRING NEW HAPPINESS, NEW GOALS, NEW
ACHIEVEMENTS, AND A LOT OF NEW INSPIRATIONS IN YOUR LIFE**



Dear Jackie, Donna, and PVA,

On behalf of the Milwaukee VA Fischer house, we thank you for coming to the house on November 13, 2024, to provide a home-cooked meal to the family staying with us. We appreciate your support and contribution to making this house a "home away from home" for all the families who come to stay. Your donation demonstrates your concern for American heroes and their families.

Thank you again from the Milwaukee VA Fischer House staff and volunteers.



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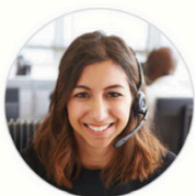
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We Want Your Feedback!



1. PVA-WI Member Satisfaction Survey

Please complete the 2024 PVA-WI Member Satisfaction Survey. Scan the QR code or visit:

<https://forms.office.com/r/EFxRFv0qfB?origin=lprLink>

2. Caregiver Registration Form

If you have a caregiver, please complete PVA-WI's Caregiver Registration Form for your caregiver, or have your caregiver complete this form themselves.

Scan the QR code or visit:

<https://forms.office.com/r/XLhLnMpc41?origin=lprLink>



25 Days of Christmas 2024 Calendar Raffle Winners

1 Rick Buth	2 Rick Carey	3 Dale Nelson	4 Bruce Jensen	5 Tyler Nelson	6 James Loved	7 Dan Vanderhoef
8 Rashaun Lewis	9 Angelo Perez	10 Skip Wojnowski	11 Rose Nelson	12 Ricky Wicklund	13 Tom Krumenacher	14 Sharon Bayless
15 Pam Reeves	16 Tom & Julie Kronenberg	17 Douglas Szygzkiewicz	18 Mike Ryneerson	19 Joseph Busateri	20 Tim Wendt	21 Tina Martinez
22 Justin Griffith	23 Joseph Thibedeau	24 Elizabeth Van Engel	25 Todd Drazy			

Supporting PVA-WI

PVA-WI has a variety of ways that individuals, groups or companies can show their support. Please review the multiple opportunities to continue to support the PVA-WI mission and our work.

If you have any questions please email info@wisconsinpva.org or call the office at (414) 328-8910.



Employee Matching

Does your employer have a matching gift program? Please check with your employer's human resources department for details. PVA-WI is happy to provide any other information your company may have to satisfy the requirements.



Donor-Advised Funds

Using a charitable giving account is another powerful way to put your charitable dollars to work. This method eliminates capital gains on donated stocks. Use the DAF donation tool at wisconsinpva.org/be-our-hero-and-make-difference-today.



Legacy Society

Join our Legacy Society by making a bequest or other estate gift to assure the sustainability of our organization. Visit www.wisconsinpva.org/planned-giving



Stock Donations

You can donate appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, which upon transfer, would be tax deductible. Please consult your financial advisor and submit questions to info@wisconsinpva.org



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Join VoterVoice

Advocate for our members with their unique needs to ensure that Wisconsin is accessible for all! Join our advocacy team by visiting votervoice.net/PVA/Campaigns



Wisconsin's Gun Shop Project & Safe Storage Program

"Scan code for details"



- Suicide Prevention Education
- Responsible Firearm Ownership
- Voluntary, Temporary Safe Storage of a Firearm

Veterans Crisis Line



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414.955.8965 fax



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SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS -

What to do with guns when a person may be in crisis.

FACT: Safe storage of a firearm for a loved one is a critical way to get them safely through a crisis period and is proven to save lives.



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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.

Department / Office	Extension	Department / Office	Extension
General information	41288	Prosthetics	42608
Triage	45845	Recreation Therapy	41256/41245/41258
SCI Clinical Appointments	41230	VA Van Travel	42057
Physical Therapy	41126	Patient Advocate	42604
Occupational Therapy	41126	NSO/Benefits - Brenda Stencil	414-902-5655
Badger Team (Social Worker)	41841	Packer Team (Social Worker)	42244
Pharmacy	42083	Packer & Badger RN	41236
Admissions ER	41885/41886		

Wisconsin VAMC

Iron Mountain	Debra Pate	(906) 774-3300 ext. 31378
Madison	Heather Rehm	((608) 256-1901 ext. 18095
Tomah	Kristin Holloway	(608) 372-3971 ext. 61548

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