Individual Allotment Policy Update

Due to budgetary constraints and some improper usage of the Chapter’s Individual Allotment (IA) program, the Board of Directors voted unanimously, at its October Board meeting, to update the IA program as detailed below.

The Individual Allotment (IA) Program’s purpose is to improve ...continued on page 6.
This is always a hopeful time, as we reflect on the end of one year and the anticipation of beginning another. We carry with us the experiences and lessons of the past year and look confidently forward with them to the new year, knowing each of us has the courage and determination to rise up and meet whatever might lay before us.

And so, as we begin 2018, we do so with pride and self-assurance. Our country looks to us as an example and we never hesitate to step up to that responsibility. We can indeed achieve anything that we put our minds to as we work together for the greater good, one action at a time - great or small.

Keeping this in mind, what are you willing to do differently this year? What are you willing to sacrifice? This year instead of sitting down and coming up with a massive list of resolutions — come up with one thing that you are willing to do and then just do it. You don’t need to overly prepare. You don’t need to go out and buy anything else to make it happen. Just do one thing.

Every sunset takes a day away from our lives, but every sunrise brings with it a new day filled with opportunities exclusively for us. I challenge you this year to make the most of these opportunities. Don’t let the sun set without having done something that day to impact someone’s life.

Michael G. Negrete
President and Paralyzed Veteran

I do sincerely hope 2018 is a good year for all. Unfortunately, there will be some who will be left behind. Why? Ask Congress that question! Ask the VA that question! I know we continue to ask & especially when we attend the PVA Annual Advocacy & Legislative Seminar the first week of March.

We all know the VA healthcare system is not perfect but for those of us who suffer SCI/D issues, its ratings are high. People only hear about the bad. Again, speaking for myself, after 30 plus years in the system, I wouldn’t go anywhere else.

Let us share what is good about the VA. Here is your call to action. I am asking for your help. Share a short story we can put in our packets that we will present to each and every New England Senator & Representative. Depending on how many we get, will depend on how many can go in the packet. While I am asking for positive, I’ll take negative too. Why? We can’t fix what is broken if we don’t know about it. They must be civil & to the point – 100 words or less. I am truly hoping to hear from a variety of you.

Debra A. Freed
Executive Director
CordWord is the New England Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America’s (New England PVA) monthly magazine that covers news, health, research, lifestyle and issues of interest and concern to Veterans and others with spinal cord injury and disease. Anyone interested in submitting an article to CordWord should email media@newenglandpva.org. The assertions and opinions expressed in articles and announcements in CordWord reflect the views of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the New England PVA. New England PVA can in no way whatsoever be held responsible for the content of such views nor can it be held liable for any direct or indirect damage that may arise from such views.

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2017 has been a year of accomplishments for the Department of Veterans Affairs and this is a perfect time to reflect on, acknowledge, and thank all of those who have enabled our many accomplishments for Veterans during this past year. We owe so much to our Nation’s leaders and others in and outside of government for supporting and enabling improvements to the ways in which we serve Veterans:

First and foremost, let me express my gratitude to President Trump. His leadership and vision have driven and inspired VA to better care for Veterans and their families. Among his many supportive acts and leadership initiatives, he has signed 9 bills to improve our ability to serve Veterans, as well as one Executive Order and three Presidential Proclamations; he has personally participated in and led six events honoring Veterans, and he has kept their interests foremost in the minds of all Americans by mentioning their service and sacrifices in 25 of his public speeches. He was the driving force behind the White House Hotline for Veterans, which opened for 24-7 service in October and has served more than 16,000 callers.

Vice President Pence has also been critical to every initiative involving Veterans. He personally led our Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington and demonstrated his concern for Veterans by supporting and attending Honor Flight ceremonies and events such as the Wounded Warrior bicycle ride.

Thanks to all the Members of Congress for making 2017 a legislative success for Veterans. With the unwavering support and leadership of our VA committees, Congress supported and passed ground-breaking legislation on VA Accountability, Appeals Reform, the Forever GI Bill, Veterans Choice Improvements, and Personnel Improvements and Extension of Choice funding.

Thanks also to my fellow Cabinet Secretaries and leaders of Administrations for their departments and agencies support:

Department of Defense: We are partnering on a new Electronic Medical Record and shared purchasing to better serve both Veterans and Service Members and best use taxpayer resources.

Housing and Urban Development: Together, VA and HUD helped house over 61,000 homeless Veterans last year alone.

Department of Energy: With DoE assistance, we’ve launched an important Veterans Brain Health Initiative and Big Data Super Computing to expand dramatically our research into Veterans’ health.

Department of Labor: Working together, the unemployment rate for Veterans has dropped to 2.6%, the lowest in 17 years.

Department of Education: With DoE’s support, VA helped enable more than 1 million Veterans to use the GI Bill in 2017.

Health and Human Services: Our collaborations have led 620,000 Veterans to participate in precision medicine initiatives, achieve a reduction of 36% in the use of opioids, and produce over 10,000 research papers that will help us better serve Veterans and all Americans.

Department of State: Thanks to DoS for coordinating the visits of dignitaries from 16 countries to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Department of Justice has assisted with revising and coordinating new Telehealth regulations and regulations for prescriptions to improve Veterans’ access to care and medications.

The Department of Interior helped provide employment opportunities for Veterans through the Park Ranger Internship Program.

The Small Business Administration almost doubled the goal of 10 percent of federal contracts with Service Disabled Veteran Owned Business by achieving 19 percent.

And thanks to our partners in the private sector for helping provide Veterans’ care. In 2017, VA authorized 6.1 million community care appointments, a 42 percent increase over 2016.

These and other collaborations have helped VA make significant progress in serving Veterans and their families. We have become more transparent by posting wait times for Veterans’ appointments, Veterans’ satisfaction with VA care and services, facility quality scores and accountability actions.

We’ve reduced dropped calls to our Veterans Crisis Line from 35% percent to less than 1 percent, ensured Veterans have same-day access to primary and mental health care at all our care facilities, identified 430 unused and under-utilized facilities for disposal, and improved claims processing times by 18 percent in 2017.

All of these accomplishments have resulted in raising Veteran “Trust” Scores from a low of 46% in 2014 to 70% today.

But we still have much work to do, and we at VA look forward to the continued support and leadership of President Trump, Members of Congress, Veterans Service Organizations, and all Americans as we fulfill Lincoln’s famous words “to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.”

As the year comes to a close, may God bless each and every one of you, and may God continue to bless this wonderful country of ours.
VA to Take Immediate Actions on Timely Payments to Community Providers

VA New Release, January 3, 2018

WASHINGTON — Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced a series of immediate actions to improve the timeliness of payments to community providers.

The actions will address the issue of delayed payments head-on and produce sustainable fixes that solve ongoing payment issues that affect Veterans, community providers and other VA partners.

“It is vital to the health of our network of providers that we provide payment in a timely and consistent fashion,” said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. “Our outside providers are an essential part of our network and we need to improve our system of payments for their services.”

VA will immediately take the following short and long-term actions to improve payments to community providers. Short-term actions include:

Publish a list identifying providers with high dollar value of unpaid claims, to be published the week of Jan. 8 at the following website: https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/.

Create rapid response teams to work on the ground with these providers to reach financial settlement within 90 days.

Increase the number of claims processed by vendors by 300 percent in January 2018 and by 600 percent in April 2018 with a goal of 90 percent clean claims processed in less than 30 days.

Establish multiple entry points for providers to check the status of their claim, including a dedicated customer service team and VA’s Vendor Inquiry System (VIS) located at https://www.vis.fsc.va.gov.

In addition, long-term actions include:

Deploy multiple IT improvements within the first six months of 2018 that streamline the claims submission and payment process to reduce time for payments significantly.

Align on concurrent performance improvement goals with VA’s existing Third Party Administrators to improve multiple aspects of their performance rapidly to ensure Veterans have continued uninterrupted access to care.

Award four new contracts in 2018 for implementation in 2019 to establish the new Community Care Network that includes elements designed to ensure prompt payment of claims.

Work with Congress to consolidate and simplify all VA community care programs, including provisions for prompt payment of claims.

Ensure transparency with VA’s claims processing performance by publishing VA’s claims processing timeliness on a monthly basis.

VA’s current Third Party Administrators, Health Net Federal Services and TriWest Healthcare Alliance are committed to working with VA to improve the timeliness of payments to community providers. Health Net and TriWest manage VA’s community care networks and process payments to community providers.

“It is an honor and responsibility to serve the Veteran community,” said Billy Maynard, CEO of Health Net. “We remain committed to partnering with VA to improve the claims payment process.”

David McIntyre, president and CEO of TriWest said, “We could not be more pleased at the aggressive focus on this critical topic. We look forward to continuing to reach the industry-leading performance level we all desire and expect.”

Improving timeliness of payments to community providers is a critical element in VA’s goal of building a community care program that is easy to understand, simple to administer and meets the needs of Veterans and their families, community providers and VA staff.

Here are resources for community care providers:

https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/resources.asp.

Learn about the new community care network in this video:

Individual Allotment Policy Update

Michael G. Negrete, President

Due to budgetary constraints and some improper usage of the Chapter’s Individual Allotment (IA) program, the Board of Directors voted unanimously, at its October Board meeting, to update the IA program as detailed below.

Member Individual Allotment Program
The Individual Allotment (IA) Program’s purpose is to improve the quality of life of New England PVA’s members by assisting in the expansion of both the quality and quantity of opportunities in sports, recreation, events and entertainment, especially those activities which enhance lifetime health and fitness, both physical and mental.

IA Funding Availability
The Chapter annually budgets for IA requests based on its fiscal funds available. The amount budgeted may vary from year-to-year based on these funds and its availability is not guaranteed. The budgeted amount is drawn down against on a first-come-first-served basis by BOD approved Individual Funding Requests. Once these funds have been depleted, no more Individual Funding Requests will be accepted for the current Fiscal year.

IA Funding Amount(s)
The maximum total amount allowable per individual per fiscal year is $500. This amount may be drawn against cumulatively, as separate funding requests submitted throughout the year, or entirely through a single funding request. An individual may not request funding above the maximum amount allowable for the fiscal year.

IA Program Minimum Eligibility Participation Requirements
1. Must be a New England Chapter member in Good Standing;
2. Must receive Annual SCI/D physical at the West Roxbury, MA, VAMC SCI/D Hub;
3. Must not have any outstanding receipts, funds, materials or equipment due to the Chapter at the time of request.

IA Request Submission Procedure
All (IA) requests shall be submitted in writing a minimum of 30 days prior to the event, function or trip requested for use. The Request should be as detailed as possible, with regard to the activity and intended use of the requested funds. Requests may be either a written letter of request mailed to the Chapter office at 1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301, West Roxbury, MA 02132, Attention: Individual Allotment Request or email to info@newenglandpva.org, with “Individual Allotment Request” in the subject line.

IA requests received after the event, function or trip has occurred will not be accepted or considered for reimbursement.

IA Eligibility Review
Requests will be reviewed by Chapter administration to determine if the applicant is eligible for IA and what level of funding is available to the applicant at the time of request. Those applicants meeting the IA eligibility requirements, with funds available, will have their IA request forwarded to the BOD for review.

IA Funding Approval Process
All IA requests received by the BOD will be individually reviewed and discussed by the BOD for approval consideration. The BOD has sole discretion and authority to approve, deny or modify any IA request, in whole or in part, for any reason they determine to do so.

Receipt of IA Funding
IA Funding is based on the reimbursement of an individual’s expenses as detailed in their IA Funding Request. Actual reimbursement(s) will only be provided for expenses submitted with a corresponding receipt. Reimbursement(s) will not exceed the amount initially requested in the Funding Request or the amount approved by the BOD, if the BOD approved an amount less than the initial amount requested.

Under no circumstance will any IA funds be distributed or release to an individual in advance of receiving the required expense receipts or required Newsletter article.

Required Newsletter Article
In addition to submitting the required receipts for reimbursement, the IA recipient is also required to compose and submit a minimum 500 word article, with pictures, about the event or activity the IA funding was use for. This article will be provided to the CordWord Editor for publishing consideration.

IA program’s usage for Sports Clinics - As long as funding is available, the Chapter will continue to cover the expense of one half the room rate for members participating in the New England Winter Sports Clinic, New England Summer Sports Clinic, and the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Since the Chapter is covering the participant’s portion of the room cost, participants may not request IA funding for the purpose of applying it to the other half of the room cost.
On November 29, 2017, PVA participated in a congressional briefing sponsored by the National Federation of the Blind in opposition to the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Education and Reform Act (H.R. 620). This PVA-opposed legislation would require a person with a disability to give notice to a public accommodation of an architectural barrier under the ADA and provide the business with an opportunity to “cure” the violation prior to filing a lawsuit.

The purpose of the briefing was to educate congressional staff about the ADA and why the notification requirements proposed by H.R. 620 would be devastating to public access for people with disabilities.

Heather Ansley, Associate General Counsel for Corporate and Government Relations, served as PVA’s representative to the panel. Other participants in the briefing were Scott LaBarre, Chairman of the Disability Rights Bar Association Board of Directors and President of the National Association of Blind Lawyers; Andy Levy, Partner, Brown Goldstein and Levy; and Andraea LaVant, Self-Advocate, Girl Scouts of America. Former Congressman Tony Coelho, principle author of the ADA, served as the moderator.

In her comments, Ms. Ansley noted that implementing a notice requirement would effectively remove all incentive for businesses to fully comply with the ADA prior to being notified by a person with a disability about a violation. This is against the goal of Title III which is to prevent denials of access by ensuring that barriers are removed so that when a person with a disability arrives at a business it is accessible to them. She also noted that compliance with the ADA is not burdensome as there are free resources available to help businesses comply with the law. For example, the federally funded ADA National Network provides free technical assistance through 10 regional centers located around the country. Businesses needing assistance can call 1-800-949-4232 to reach the center nearest them.

At this time, we still do not know when, or if, this legislation will move to the House floor. It was passed on a party-line vote by the House Judiciary Committee in September. In the meantime, please continue to contact your House Member to let him or her know that you oppose H.R. 620.
Connect With What Matters

Being there makes a difference

Recently the Ride-Away team joined forces with MobilityWorks so that we could provide our veterans with the largest selection of mobility solutions that best fit their physical capabilities and lifestyle. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together find the best solution. Collectively, Ride-Away and MobilityWorks will continue to build on our mission to help veterans connect with who and what matters most.

MobilityWorks has more than 50 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Minivans, full-size vans and trucks
- The latest in adaptive technology
- Complete maintenance and service
- Rental vans — veterans receive a 10% discount

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

Gray
32 Lewiston Road, Unit 2B
Gray, ME 04039
207-747-2064

Essex Junction
5C David Drive
Essex Junction, VT 05452
802-222-0265

Londonerry
54 Wentworth Avenue
Londonerry, NH 03053
603-210-4610

North Attleboro
57 George Leven Drive
North Attleboro MA 02760
508-859-0940

Norwood
333 Boston Providence Turnpike
Norwood, MA 02062
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East Hartford
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www.newenglandpva.org
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KEMPF

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Winter Veteran Events

Alpine Skiing
Fat Bike Rides
Bowling
Indoor Rock Climbing

Call to Register or online at www.nepassage.org/calendar

Northeast Passage Veteran Events
Northeast Passage holds monthly events for veterans, giving the opportunity to try new recreational activities. If you have never tried the activity before or are an active participant, come join the social setting. Events will range from instruction to active participation. Locations and activity level will vary. All NEP recreational and veteran events are open to all veterans free of charge. Please contact us for more information.

Northeast Passage
121 Technology Dr., Durham NH 03824
603-862-0070
northeast.passage@unh.edu

Funding for this program is provided to Northeast Passage through a grant from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Alpine Skiing
1/12, 2/9, 3/9 Mount Snow VT, 2/16 Bromley VT
3/16 Wildcat, 3/23 Attitash

Fat Bike Rides
1/20, 2/2, 2/13 - Rockingham Rail Trail, Auburn, NH
3/2 - Northwood Meadows State Park, Northwood, NH
3/14, 3/31 - Mines Falls and Yudicky Farm, Nashua, NH

Bowling
1/18-2/22 - Manchester, NH, 3-5:00PM

Indoor Rock Climbing
1/27, 2/6, 2/27, 3/5, 3/19 - EVO Rock Gym, Concord, NH

Registration Required

Check out nepassage.org/calendar
ANNUAL AIR RIFLE & AIR PISTOL PROGRAM

Arizona Air Rifle/Archery & Boccia Tournament*
Sept. 6-8, 2017
Phoenix, AZ

West Virginia Air Rifle & Boccia Tournament*
Oct. 27-28, 2017
Martinsburg, WV

KY-IN Air Rifle & Boccia Tournament*
Nov 16-18, 2017
Lexington, KY

Cal-Diego Air Rifle Tournament
Jan. 22-23, 2018
San Diego, CA

Mid-Atlantic Air Rifle Tournament
March 7-8, 2018
Richmond, VA

Wisconsin Air Rifle Tournament
March 23-25, 2018
Milwaukee, WI

Buckeye Air Rifle Tournament
April 21-22, 2018
Geneva, OH

*indicates combined events

PARALYZED VETERANS NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS CIRCUIT

Wisconsin Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament
Aug. 4-6, 2017
Green Bay, WI

North Central Shooting Sports Tournament
Sept. 8-10, 2017
Sioux Falls, SD

Keystone Shooting Sports Tournament
Sept. 22-24, 2017
Clairton, PA

Arizona Shooting Sports Tournament
Nov. 3-5, 2017
Phoenix, AZ

Mid-Atlantic Shooting Sports Tournament
Nov. 10-12, 2017
Charles City, VA

Florida Gulf Coast Shooting Sports Tournament
March 1-3, 2018
Odessa, FL

Nevada Shooting Sports Tournament
March 16-18, 2018
Las Vegas, NV

Cal-Diego Shooting Sports Tournament & Cal-Diego Rifle/Pistol
March 23-25, 2018
Redlands, CA

Vaughan Shooting Sports Tournament
April 20-22, 2018
Edwardsville, IL

Minnesota Shooting Sports Tournament
May 18-20, 2018
Minneapolis, MN

Lone Star Shooting Sports Tournament
June 22-24, 2018
Waxahachie, TX

Iowa Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament
June 15-17, 2018
Cedar Rapids, IA

PARALYZED VETERANS BASS TOUR

Mid-America Bass Tournament
Sept. 22-24, 2017
Eufaula, OK

Lone Star Bass Tournament
Sept. 29—Oct. 1, 2017
Garland, TX

Southeastern Bass Tournament
Evans, GA

Vaughan Bass Tournament
Oct. 27-29, 2017
Mt. Vernon, IL

Florida Gulf Coast Bass Tournament
April 6–8, 2018
Kissimmee, FL

KY-IN Bass Tournament
May 4-6, 2018
Kuttawa, KY

National Bass Tournament
June 1-3, 2018
Marbury, MD

Mid-Atlantic Bass Tournament
June 8-10, 2018
Richmond, VA

ANNUAL PARALYZED VETERANS/NWPA BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT SERIES

Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament
Sept. 15-17, 2017
Virginia Beach, VA

Mid-South Billiards Tournament
Oct. 13-14, 2017
Memphis, TN

Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament
March 23-25, 2018
Midlothian, VA

Mid-America Billiards Tournament
April 20-22, 2018
Oklahoma City, OK

Mountain States Billiards Tournament
May 4-5, 2018
Fountain, CO

Buckeye Billiards Tournament**
June 22-23, 2018
Wickliffe, OH

**non-sanctioned events

ANNUAL PARALYZED VETERANS/AWBA BOWLING TOURNAMENT SERIES

Great Plains Bowling Tournament
July 6-9, 2017
Council Bluffs, IA

Mountain States Bowling Tournament
Aug. 24-27, 2017
Colorado Springs, CO

Mid-Atlantic Bowling Tournament
Sept. 22-24, 2017
Glen Allen, VA

Nevada Bowling Tournament
Nov. 30—December 3, 2017
Las Vegas, NV

Florida Gulf Coast Bowling Tournament
Feb. 23-25, 2018
Tampa, FL

Vaughan Bowling Tournament
May 3-6, 2018
Romeoville, IL

PARALYZED VETERANS RACING

Pensacola Cycling
Sept. 16-17, 2017
Pensacola, FL

Air Force Marathon
Sept. 16, 2017
Dayton, OH

Pocahontas State Park Off-Road Ride
Sept. 30, 2017
Richmond, VA

Army Ten-Miler
Oct. 8, 2017
Washington, DC

Blue and Gray
Oct. 21-22, 2017
Gettysburg, PA

38TH NVWG
July 30-Aug. 4, 2018
Orlando, FL

For more information, visit: pva.org/sports

www.newenglandpva.org
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SLED HOCKEY CLINIC

Photo credit: Paul Stinson

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Come join us for the 2017-2018 Season. We supply all of the equipment.

Clinics Times Mondays: Oct 2, Oct 9, Oct 16, Oct 23, Oct 30, Nov 6, Nov 13, Nov 20, Nov 27, Dec 4, Dec 11, Dec 18, Jan 8, Jan 15, Jan 29, Feb 5, Feb 12, Feb 19, Feb 26, Mar 5, Mar 12, Mar 19, Mar 26, Apr 2, from 1:40-3:20PM at Campion Rink, 394 West Lebanon, NH 03784. For more Information contact:

Jennifer Stark Jennifer.Stark3@va.gov  Dave Santamore kwwbs1@yahoo.com
or Louisa Howard howardlouisa@yahoo.com

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COMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Jan 22: 8th Annual Sled Hockey Clinic. James W. Campion III Rink
Jan 22-26: New England Winter Sports Clinic
Jan 26-28: The Go Fish Dan Sports Show Boxborough, MA. Chapter will have awareness table setup at this event.
Mar 4-9: PVA Annual Advocacy & Legislative Seminar
Apr 1-6: National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic Snowmass Village, CO
Apr 27-29: Brockton Gym Bldg. 23, Air Gun/Boccia Tournament – Spaulding Rehab/VA Rec Therapy
Jun 2: NEPVA Bass Fishing - Newton Yacht Club, MA
Jul 16-20: New England Summer Sports Clinic
Jul 29-Aug 5: National Veterans Wheelchair Games, Orlando, FL
Sep 7-9: NEPVA Bass Trail Fishing - Lake Winnipesaukee, NH

For more information on any upcoming events please contact the Chapter office at (800) 660-1181.

Mike Guilbault - Sports Director
Mike Moran - Asst. Sports Director

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