



**FY21 ANNUAL REPORT: SERVING FOR 75 YEARS AND COUNTING**



**CHARLES BROWN**  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT

**DEAR FRIENDS,**

*I'm truly honored to be at the helm of this outstanding organization. This past year we rolled into our 75th year of serving Veterans with spinal cord injury and disorders, MS or ALS. The ongoing pandemic showed us that when PVA is presented with challenges, we undoubtedly adapt and overcome any obstacles in our way. That drive, perseverance and competence are at the very core of who we are.*

*When World War II Veterans returned home with spinal cord injuries in the 1940s, they had to become advocates for themselves. They banded together to ensure they were getting the best health care possible and access to benefits in order to be able to live and thrive in life despite their new injuries. These Veterans eventually officially formed the Paralyzed Veterans of America, with chapters across the country.*

*Today, our outreach to Veterans living with SCI/D, MS and ALS continues and remains stronger than ever. Thanks to the efforts of our top-notch Veterans benefits department we continue to ensure our Veterans are receiving their earned benefits. This year alone securing nearly \$250 million in benefits for the Veterans and families we represent. Our sports and recreation programs continue to thrive with new virtual programming from various live online adaptive sports classes, to educational webinars to keep our Veterans active both physically and mentally, which has been vital during this time.*

*Our strong advocacy efforts on behalf of Veterans saw many wins including the signing of a new law that increases the overall value of the Specially Adapted Housing grant and provides qualifying Veterans with twice as many opportunities to access their grant.*

*The specific needs of our women Veterans are also being addressed in the Deborah Sampson Act. The act addresses improving the health care of women Veterans at VA through research, pilot programs, and organization and staffing guidance.*

*Our medical services and architecture staff continue to evaluate and improve care at SCI Centers through virtual site visits. And our Veterans Career Live initiative has proven to be an invaluable resource for Veterans throughout the pandemic.*

*In May, in celebration of our 75th anniversary, we awarded a total of \$1.5 million (\$750,000 each) to two longtime PVA research partners—the Human Engineering Research Lab (HERL), University of Pittsburgh and the Center for Neuroscience and Regeneration Research, Yale University to help advance their work to improve the quality of life for Veterans living with SCI/D.*

*I am truly inspired by the members we serve. Thank you for your support and for being an integral part of our strong community, helping to bring these vital programs and services to our most catastrophically injured Veterans. We simply could not do it without you.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** *(AS OF JULY 1, 2021)*



**Robert Thomas**  
National Senior  
Vice President



**Hack Albertson**  
National  
Vice President



**Josue Cordova**  
National  
Vice President



**Tammy Jones**  
National  
Vice President



**Michael Negrete**  
National  
Vice President



**Marcus Murray**  
National  
Secretary



**Tom Wheaton, Jr.**  
National  
Treasurer



**David Zurfluh**  
Immediate  
Past President



**For 75 years,** PVA has advocated for the health care, benefits, and civil rights of all veterans with spinal cord injuries and diseases like MS and ALS. Our work has helped improve the lives of not only our members, but also the lives of millions of people with disabilities. We will continue until all of their voices are heard.

**– Carl Blake, Executive Director, PVA**



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# ENSURING QUALITY HEALTH CARE



TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/medical-services](https://PVA.org/medical-services)



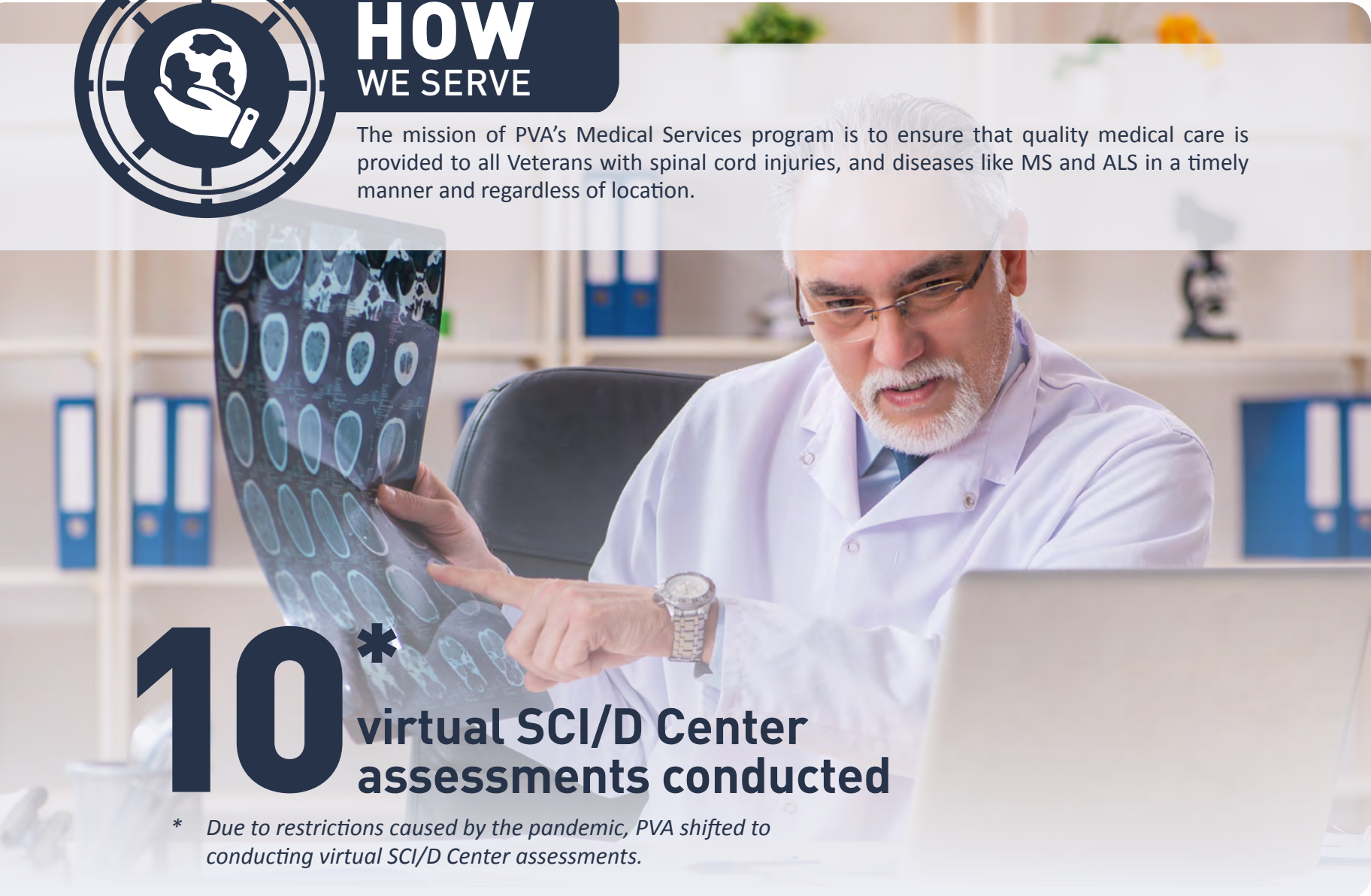
## HOW WE SERVE

The mission of PVA's Medical Services program is to ensure that quality medical care is provided to all Veterans with spinal cord injuries, and diseases like MS and ALS in a timely manner and regardless of location.

# 10\*

**virtual SCI/D Center assessments conducted**

*\* Due to restrictions caused by the pandemic, PVA shifted to conducting virtual SCI/D Center assessments.*



## OUR IMPACT

**The restrictions created by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the past year presented unforeseen challenges for everyone,** but PVA's medical services team pivoted and adapted, just as health care staff at VA Medical Centers and other hospitals across the world were forced to do.

When it was clear to our site survey team that the pandemic was going to continue on longer than expected and that in-person site survey assessments could not take place, PVA's medical services and architecture teams enacted a detailed plan to conduct thorough surveys through a virtual format, mirroring in-person surveys as closely as possible.

On January 20-21, 2021, the inaugural virtual site assessment with the Miami VA's SCI/D Center leadership and staff was completed, and the site survey report was submitted to the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Following the Miami virtual site survey, medical services scheduled virtual surveys for all SCI/D Centers as an interim solution until in-person surveys can once again occur.

Throughout the pandemic, PVA's medical services team has remained in close contact with staff at each SCI/D Center, including the PVA national service officers, the SCI/D chief, nursing managers and therapy leadership. The medical services team monitors how each center has adapted to provide access to care for all Veterans with SCI/D, and is sharing success measures between centers. At the end of each month, PVA service officers at every SCI/D Center send a Bed and Staffing Report to medical services and this data is compiled into a monthly Bed and Staffing Roll-up Report. Admissions and staffing numbers at all sites are monitored, trended monthly, and shared with PVA leadership. If negative trends in staffing or admissions are identified, the medical services team works directly with the service officers and SCI/D staff to identify solutions to mitigate the negative trend.



## OUR IMPACT

PVA’s medical services team is closely entwined with staff at every Center and has become the keepers of best practices for SCI/D Centers. Whether it’s a variety of sports and recreation programs, excellence in virtual group therapy, pandemic-adapted visitation, arts therapy, telehealth excellence or pandemic-adapted annual examinations, some Centers have excelled while adapting to the restrictions of the pandemic while others seek further guidance and support.

Additionally, the medical services team has partnered with local and national VA staff, as well as PVA members and staff, further improving Women’s Health Services, the VA’s Whole Health Initiative and Peer Mentoring programs. The team tirelessly seeks opportunities to learn from outside organizations, including the Christopher Reeve Foundation, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, the American Spinal Injury Association, the ALS Association and the MS Association.

The medical services team identifies departments or sites that are experiencing challenges and directly connects them with team members from other centers that can help them elevate their program to excellence.

## ANNIVERSARY FACTS

For the past 37 years, PVA’s medical services team has partnered with the VA and been granted exclusive access to its SCI/D system to ensure the VA provides quality specialized care. Each year, PVA’s site survey team — made up of a physician, nurse, architect and PVA member — visit each SCI/D center and assess each facility. PVA’s team looks at all aspects of care, from the number of specialty long-term care beds, equipment maintenance and accessibility, to staffing levels and morale.



## SITE SURVEY TEAM



### WHO WE ARE

- > PVA staff nurses
- > Physicians
- > Architects
- > PVA members (Field Advisory Committee)



### WHAT WE DO

- > Inspect medical facilities
- > Confer with VA leadership and staff
- > Ensure prior problems have been corrected
- > Speak directly with Veterans and their families to identify gaps in needs



### WHAT WE EVALUATE

- > Number of specialty long-term-care beds
- > Equipment maintenance and accessibility
- > Staffing levels and morale
- > Layout of rooms, hallways, therapy areas, handicap parking considerations





# SECURING

## BENEFITS FOR VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/benefits](https://PVA.org/benefits)



## HOW WE SERVE

Each year, our national service officers (NSOs) help thousands of Veterans and family members obtain the benefits they have earned through their military service or the service of their loved one. Our NSOs are experts in Veterans law and regulations and are often one of the first people at a Veteran's bedside after injury. They are also usually their first line of contact to getting assistance with health care and benefits needs such as disability payments, specially adapted housing and automobile grants.

**"As a national service officer for Paralyzed Veterans of America, I get to change people's lives, figure out problems and how to overcome them. At the end result, help the person, whether it's the Veteran or the family."**



**Tami Anderson, Sr. National Service Officer, U.S. Navy Veteran**

Many of our NSOs are also paralyzed Veterans themselves and understand the needs of the Veteran.

**"I became affiliated with PVA in 1983. I was newly injured, and one of the service officers came into the hospital room where I was, and told me that he was with PVA, and that he was going to take care of me. So, sure enough he did, and then I came to work with PVA as a service officer in September of 1995. I've been with PVA for over 20 years. It's been remarkable."**



**Anthony Steele, Central Region Director, PVA Member, U.S. Army Veteran**

## OUR IMPACT

**\$1 billion**  
paid to date to the veterans and families PVA represents

**Since the pandemic restrictions in VA hospitals have made it difficult for NSOs and their staff**

to conduct in person visits with inpatient and outpatient Veterans with spinal cord injuries, our PVA staff has had to find new ways to connect with Veteran clients. Crystal Randolph, secretary in the Richmond VA service office, began implementing virtual visits with Veterans.

*"Microsoft Teams has been provided to us by the VA, as a free service, enabling me to meet with inpatient and outpatient Veterans online. This has provided Veterans a way to see me virtually and address any concerns they have, while also helping to mitigate some of the loneliness that this pandemic has brought to our vulnerable SCI population."*

Crystal adds, "the ability to see my face and interact on a screen has helped brighten some of their days and let them know they are not talking to just anyone on the other side of the phone. This process has been successful thus far. Especially as we are seeing COVID-19 on the rise again with the Delta variant, it is important to expand our services and let our inpatient Veterans know that even when we aren't physically there, we are still here to address their concerns."

**20K** new issues/claims filed



OUR IMPACT

**2,464**  
client interviews  
conducted

**\$40M+** in automobile grants  
and automobile  
adaptive equipment

**\$36M+** in specially adapted  
housing grants

**ANNIVERSARY**  
**FACTS** 

Today, **Veterans Benefits** is PVA's largest department with 75 service offices across the country. PVA national service officers at each of these locations specialize in helping Veterans who are severely injured or suffer disabling diseases. We also assist any Veteran or their family members who come to us for help.



# EMPOWERING VETERANS THROUGH SPORTS AND RECREATION

TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/sports](https://PVA.org/sports)



## HOW WE SERVE

The mission of PVA's Sports and Recreation program has always been to improve the quality of life for paralyzed Veterans and other persons with disabilities through adaptive sports and recreation programs that promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

While the pandemic brought about many challenges that halted our in-person events, it also brought about opportunity — the opportunity to serve our members and keep the Veteran community engaged and active in a different way, virtually. Over the past fiscal year, PVA's Sports and Recreation program has created and delivered virtual programs and events from adaptive yoga, to online fitness training classes, virtual cycling classes, e-sports and cooking classes. We've also hosted numerous educational webinars introducing PVA members to growing sports like pickleball. We even shifted from planning our annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games to a virtual event.

**21** total unique adaptive sports and recreation programs offered

**10** unique virtual events hosted  
7,100 participants. 4,576 were PVA Members.

## OUR IMPACT



"They adapted and presented the material in a way such that anyone in a chair could participate regardless of their personal constraints. I found myself gaining core strength and stability as well as flexibility throughout this program."

Bill Grossett, PVA Member, U.S. Navy Veteran



"Wheelchair rugby and adaptive sports have impacted my life in so many positive ways... It has given me camaraderie, mentorship and a support group, that has taught me far more than I ever learned in my hospital therapy settings on how to live with my disability."

Jesse Graham, PVA Member, U.S. Air Force Veteran



## ANNIVERSARY FACTS

**Adaptive sports first started in VA hospitals with World War II Veterans** playing wheelchair basketball. These same Veterans went on to become PVA's founding members. Adaptive sports is now used as recreation therapy in VA hospitals and is an integral part of a Veterans rehabilitation process.

# HELPING

VETERANS FIND MEANINGFUL CAREERS



TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/employment](https://PVA.org/employment)



## HOW WE SERVE

PVA's Veterans Career Program highlights our commitment to holistic support for Veterans and their family members. Veterans Career Live, launched in January 2020, is our virtual career program. PVA's Veterans Career Live program bridges the gap between career resources and Veterans with disabilities who are not willing or able to attend traditional hiring events. PVA's Veterans Career Live has proven to be an invaluable resource to interact with Veterans and provide pandemic-specific engagement.

Since 2020, the global pandemic has had a major impact on the nation's economy and career opportunities. This created an especially difficult environment for Veterans with significant disabilities. According to the latest U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) release on the employment situation of Veterans during 2020, the jobless rate for all Veterans increased to 6.5%. The unemployment rate for Veterans with a disability rating of 60% or higher was 9.6%, well above the unemployment rate for general Veterans with a service-connected disability, which is 6.2%. None of these numbers take into consideration the employment situation of Veterans with non-service-connected disabilities, a group that PVA's Veterans Career Program serves.

However, PVA's Veterans Career Program is hyper-focused on ensuring that we are engaging and supporting Veterans with significant disabilities, their family members, and caregivers. More than 65% of our clients have a significant disability or barrier to employment.



## SUCCESS STORY: OTIS MATTOX

In 2019, Otis was nearing the end of his extensive rehabilitation and was ready to start thinking about his future so a PVA national service officer referred him to Veterans Career Program Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Genia Hachenberg.

Otis was at a crossroads: he could pursue paid employment or he could secure the long-term disability benefits to which he was entitled. Genia carefully presented both options making clear that the decision was his to make, and PVA support would not waiver. Otis was adamant that paid employment was his goal saying,

*“Even though I’m in my 50s, I don’t think I’m done. Why not just make a life? I can still make a life for myself. So that’s my motivation right there, all itself. I can do something with my life.”*

Next, Otis pursued education through the VA's Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program. Initially, Otis's application with VR&E was denied as they did not believe he would be able to successfully work, but Genia guided him through a lengthy appeal process and ultimately, he was successful.

## OUR IMPACT

In August of 2020, Otis enrolled in a local technical college to build a new skill set. Genia and Otis discussed what it would be like to be back in the classroom, and she advised him on accommodations and addressed some of his “first day of school” nerves. Overall, Otis enjoyed being out of the house, interacting with new people, and learning again.

Otis attended several PVA Veterans Career Live sessions, learning different tactics on interviewing and resume development, and networking with employers. He also enjoyed interacting with other Veterans and learning about free resources, such as Saylor Academy, where Otis earned a certificate in customer service.



**SUCCESS STORY:  
TRACEY COOPER HARRIS**

Tracey Cooper-Harris joined the U.S. Army at 17, serving from 1991-2003 as an Animal Care Sergeant in Operation Enduring Freedom & Operation Iraqi Freedom.

After returning home, she obtained a B.S. in Kinesiology from Cal State Northridge. That same year, she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. She began working for the VA, helping Veterans overcome difficult issues after service. Looking to bring in more resources, she reached out to PVA's Veterans Career Program. Not only did she learn the ways that the program could help the Veterans she was working with, she discovered she was eligible for PVA membership and joined the California chapter.

*"With MS, I have issues with the heat. The words start slurring and my balance is off," Tracey says. "I also have to be careful with stress."*

**ANNIVERSARY  
FACTS** 

**Launched in 2007**, PVA's Veterans Career Program offers high-touch, one-on-one support to Veterans, their families and caregivers to help them find meaningful employment, education or volunteer opportunities. The program has helped more than 5,000 Veterans, military spouses and caregivers find meaningful work.

Tracey didn't realize the ways stress could affect her until her father got sick. She was on the West Coast working and doing her Master's online, and her father was on the East Coast. Tracey was going back and forth to care for him, and it was hard on her. She had a relapse. They changed her medication, and she didn't react well. Her father passed. She lost her job. Then she failed four courses, back to back.

But with the support of her wife and fellow Veterans, and drawing on her determination, Tracey approached her dean and got back on track. The dean told her she could continue her school while on academic probation, but she would have to make "A's in all her classes. Tracey was undeterred.

She earned her Master's, and worked with PVA's Veterans Career Program to stay motivated and find a job.







# FIGHTING

FOR THE RIGHTS OF VETERANS

TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/advocacy](https://PVA.org/advocacy)



## HOW WE SERVE

PVA's Government Relations department is made up of two teams - our legislative staff and our advocacy staff. PVA's legislative staff continues to focus on policies affecting our nation's Veterans. This past year our legislative staff worked on Congress's and VA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including access to the vaccine. Staff also prioritized efforts to expedite expansion of VA's Comprehensive Family Caregiver Program, preserve access to VA's SCI/D System of Care, fund construction of SCI/D long-term care facilities, and improve VA's Auto Allowance grant and Automobile Adapted Equipment grant.

PVA's national advocacy staff continued their focus on efforts to improve the lives of our members as well as all people with disabilities. Advocacy staff evaluated the impact of the pandemic on people with disabilities. Staff also worked on improving access to air travel for people with disabilities, including mask requirements, and promoting legislation that will improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Staff also participated in efforts to ensure people who use wheelchairs have access to autonomous vehicles and all people with disabilities are able to vote independently.

## 5 "chats"\*

hosted to keep PVA members up to date on policy priorities and victories

\* Chats covered: Veterans priority of service; hotel access; social security financing and overview of 2021 legislative and advocacy priorities

**300+** individuals have taken action/signed up for alerts through PVA's grassroots portal - VoterVoice.

## 6 action alerts sent

regarding increasing VA's automobile allowance; improving access to IVF; protecting access to VA's specialized services; expediting access to VA's caregiver program; improving access to air travel; and increasing disability employment and tax credits for removing barriers

### PVA Policy Priorities for the First Session of the 117th Congress

- A. Protect access to VA's specialized services
- B. Expand access to VA's long-term services and supports
- C. Increase access to IVF
- D. Enhance care for women Veterans with SCI/D
- E. Strengthen benefits for catastrophically disabled Veterans
- F. Enhance benefits for surviving spouses of catastrophically disabled Veterans
- G. Strengthen Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA)
- H. Promote increased compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- I. Preserve and strengthen Social Security
- J. Prioritize employment opportunities for people with disabilities

### 2021 Virtual Advocacy/Legislation Seminar March 1-5, 2021

- 150+ individuals from all 33 chapters attended
- 275 virtual appointments with members of Congress
- 12 critical issues discussed



*"The unique needs of catastrophically disabled Veterans — from mental health needs to women Veterans with SCI/D who are a growing, distinct subpopulation — must not be overlooked. That's why we need you to help us protect access to VA's specialized services, expand access to long-term care options, expedite caregiver benefits, and increase transportation options for paralyzed Veterans."*

— **David Zurfluh, National President (FY 2021)**, during his oral testimony on March 4, 2021 before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee

### Independent Budget Recommendations

On February 1, 2021, the Independent Budget Veterans Service Organizations (IBVSOs) — DAV (Disabled American Veterans), PVA, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) — released [The Independent Budget: Veterans Agenda for the 117th Congress](#) and our [VA budget recommendations](#) for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 advance appropriations.



In the Veterans Agenda for the 117th Congress, the IBVSOs elected to focus on 11 critical issues addressing health care, benefits, and education and employment. Several of the critical issues, including ensuring Veterans access to long-term care and support services and sufficient VA health care staffing, directly relate to PVA priorities.

For FY 2022 and FY 2023, the IB recommended:

**\$120.3 billion\***  
for all VA programs and services

\* This recommendation would allow VA to fill over 10,000 health care vacancies, complete the caregiver program expansion, increase home-based long-term care services, and address inequities in health care delivery to women and minority Veterans.

## OUR IMPACT

### Specially Adapted Housing Bill Becomes Law

On July 23, 2020 the House unanimously approved H.R. 3504, the Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019. The President signed the bill into law on August 8, 2020. PVA strongly supported this legislation and actively participated in efforts to secure its passage. This legislation increases the overall value of the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant to and provides qualifying Veterans with twice as many opportunities to access their grant.

### Omnibus Bill Addresses Veterans' Benefits and Health Care

On January 5, 2021, President Trump signed H.R.7105, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020, an omnibus bill including a variety of Veterans-related provisions addressing benefits and health care. The package contains many provisions that PVA had a hand in developing. Key items include elimination of the 12-year delimitation date for the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program for those who enrolled in it after January 1, 2013; modernization of the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI) program; and reduction of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) remarriage penalty age from 57 to 55.

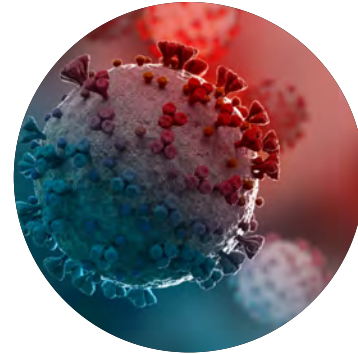
We were also pleased that nearly all of the provisions in the Senate passed version of the Deborah Sampson Act (DSA) made it into the omnibus. Versions of the DSA have been in play for multiple congressional sessions. This part of the package is aimed at improving the health care of women Veterans at VA through research, pilot programs, and organization and staffing guidance. Provisions require VA to prioritize retrofitting existing medical facilities to make it safer and easier for women Veterans to get care; ensure each VA facility has accessible, clinically appropriate prosthetic appliances for women Veterans; and conduct a study on infertility services provided by VA.



## OUR IMPACT

### Securing COVID Vaccine Priority Access for SCI/D Veterans

On February 19, 2021, VA formally announced that SCI/D veterans would have priority access to the COVID vaccine regardless of age. VA's decision is based on data showing that SCI/D Veterans who contract COVID have higher adverse outcomes. As a result, all veterans with SCI/D, are now eligible for the vaccine through VA.



### Law Passed Providing Caregivers Access to the COVID Vaccine Through VA

In March 2021, President Biden signed the PVA supported SAVE LIVES Act into law (P.L. 117-4), expanding VA's legal authority to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all Veterans, regardless of their VA health care enrollment status, as well as Veteran spouses, caregivers, and some beneficiaries. However, this expanded authority depends on readily available COVID-19 vaccine supply and requires VA to continue to prioritize vaccinations and health care delivery for our nation's Veterans enrolled in VA care.



### Air Travel Accessibility Remains Top Priority

On March 9, 2021, Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Senator Ed Markey (D-MA), Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), and Senator Maggie Hassan (D-NH) and Representative Jim Langevin (D-RI), Representative Dina Titus (D-NV), and Representative Steve Cohen (D-TN) reintroduced the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act (ACAAA) (S. 642/H.R. 1696), which would require airlines to meet access standards on aircraft and create a private right of action for passengers with disabilities who face discrimination.



# ADA30

★ 1990 - 2020 ★

## Americans with Disabilities Act

Celebrate the ADA! July 26, 2020

### PVA Celebrates the 30th Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

In 2020, PVA celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act – a sweeping civil rights law, signed by President George H.W. Bush, that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. As part of the celebration, it created a series of animation videos highlighting common challenges people with disabilities face and how ADA compliance eliminates those barriers. PVA led the charge for passage of this legislation, which is regarded as the nation's most comprehensive law affecting people with disabilities.



## ANNIVERSARY FACTS

**PVA was awarded its congressional charter in 1971.** With this charter came an invitation to testify before the House and Senate on Veterans issues, giving PVA and Veterans with SCI/D a powerful voice before Congress. PVA has also played an integral part in the passage of landmark legislation like the Americans With Disabilities Act, Air Carrier Access Act and others, impacting not only the lives of Veterans but all people with disabilities.



# MAKING AMERICA ACCESSIBLE

TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/accessibledesign](https://PVA.org/accessibledesign)



## HOW WE SERVE

For the last 40 years PVA's Architecture department has worked to ensure that VA medical center facilities continue providing the best health care environments for Veterans with SCI/D, and this work has continued even through the current pandemic. PVA architects evaluate the condition of buildings and spaces, parking, equipment, and housekeeping in order to advocate for medical centers that can provide the very best care for Veterans with SCI/D. While much of PVA's work switched from in-person to virtual, PVA continued investigating, assessing, and rectifying VA facility problems through calls, emails, video meetings, and even virtual tours throughout the year.

PVA architects have the unique design knowledge and expertise in health care facilities specifically for the care and rehabilitation of Veterans with SCI/D. Our architects collaborate with the VA, USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and top national architecture firms on all VA medical facilities for Veterans with SCI/D, ensuring every new and existing facility fully meets the needs of Veterans with spinal cord injury or disease.

# 10

virtual SCI/D Center assessments conducted with PVA Medical Services

## OUR IMPACT

**In FY21 PVA architects joined project teams as SCI/D design experts on countless small to medium VA medical center renovation and expansion projects** throughout the year, as well as several major design and construction projects. The major projects included the replacement hospital with a new SCI/D Center in St. Louis, MO, a new SCI/D Acute and Long-Term Care Center in San Diego, CA, and a new SCI/D Long-Term Care Center in Dallas, TX.

Currently, there is a desperate need nationally for more facilities suitable to care for the most vulnerable long-term care Veterans with SCI/D. Once completed, the San Diego SCI/D Center will add 20 new long-term care beds to the VA's SCI/D system of care, and the Dallas Long-Term Care Center will add 60 new long-term care beds. Additionally, the St. Louis John Cochran Replacement Hospital and SCI/D Center will relocate acute-care beds from Jefferson Barracks to establish the need for a future project to renovate existing SCI/D space for a future SCI/D long-term care center project. This will add a significant number of new long-term beds. From early project planning all the way through construction, we continue to ensure that

these facilities will be the latest state-of-the-art environments where Veterans with SCI/D can receive the best health care.

In addition to 26 SCI/D centers (hubs) generally near major cities, there over 150 SCI/D outpatient clinics (spokes) spread around the country and U.S. territories (*see map on next page*). Recently, we implemented a new initiative to contact all clinics, review the condition of each facility, and work with the VA to make any improvements needed. This effort will ensure that all Veterans with SCI/D have nearby access to quality health care even if they live in rural areas.

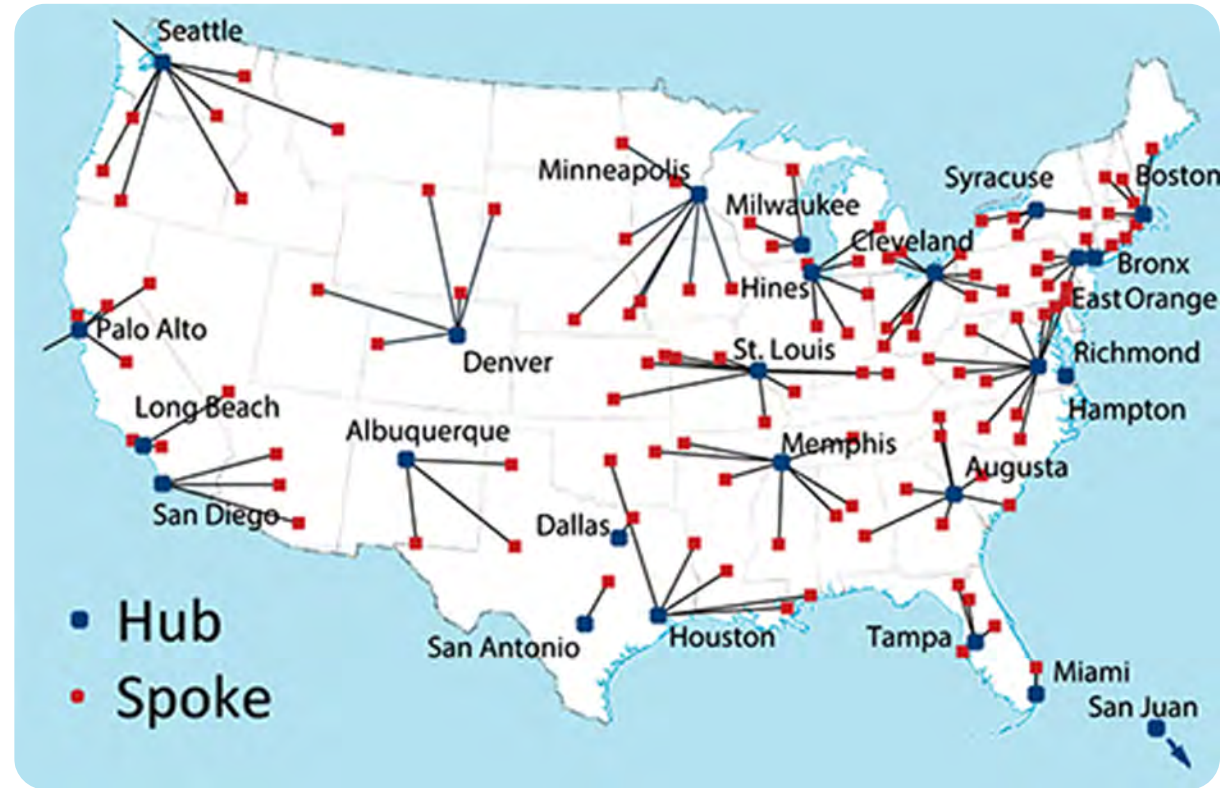
# 50+

individuals\* assisted on design and construction projects improving accessibility for themselves or others with disabilities

\* Individuals include homeowners, building owners, developers, architects and contractors on their design and construction projects in order to improve accessibility for themselves or others with disabilities.



## VA SCI/D HUB & SPOKE LOCATIONS



## ANNIVERSARY FACTS

In the 1980's PVA hired its first architect on staff and shortly after went on to form a full staff of architects. Beyond its work with the VA, PVA's architecture team has served as subject matter experts for large public projects including the 1996 Olympics, where they ensured sports venues and housing complexes were accessible for both athletes and spectators; the National World War II Memorial; Washington Nationals Baseball Park; the Disabled Veterans for Life Memorial; Minnesota Vikings Stadium; and the JFK Center for the Performing Arts expansion.





# SEARCHING FOR A CURE

TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/research](https://PVA.org/research)





## HOW WE SERVE

PVA Research Foundation grants impact the lives and careers of the scientists and clinicians who receive them. Whether the grant is a first grant, as our fellowship grants are frequently, or it comes at a time that allows a scientist to unlock a long-studied technique or effort, they have impact in the field of spinal cord injury and disease — the ultimate quest for the cure — as well as in developing new treatments to improve the health, mobility and quality of life of our Veterans and other living with these disabilities.

“The support I received from my PVA fellowship grant was a major factor in helping me secure my independent research position at Boston University where I am now an Assistant Professor in the Biomedical Engineering department. I look forward to continuing to work on and contributing to SCI research and further new therapies for SCI as an independent investigator and indeed it will be a central focus on my new lab. I also look forward to continuing to interact with the Research Foundation and the other members of the PVA family as we work on this common mission.”



Dr. Timothy O'Shea, University of California, Research Foundation Grantee

The mission of the PVA Education Foundation is to support institutions, agencies, and organizations to ensure quality of care in spinal cord injury and disease by improving the abilities and competence of health professionals, persons with spinal cord injury and/or disease, and significant others.

Education grants funded in FY 21 include:

- Everlasting Love-A series about sexuality, SCI, MS and ALS, Marcalee Alexander, MD, Sustain Our Abilities, Birmingham, AL
- Improving Personal Care Assistance for People with SCI Through Online Education, Jeanne Zanca, PhD, MPT, Kessler Foundation, West Orange, NJ
- Telehealth Wheelchair Service Provision Online Course, Rachel Hibbs, DPT, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA
- Adaptation and Dissemination of the Spinal Cord Injury Physical Activity Guidelines, Kimberley Monden, PhD, Regents of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
- 11th Annual Gait and Balance Symposium in Multiple Sclerosis, Brett Fling, PhD, Colorado State University, Ft Collins, CO
- 4th Annual Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and Central Nervous System (CNS) Neuroimmunology Symposium, Vijayshree Yadav, MD, MCR, FAAN, FANA, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, OR

**5** research projects awarded

**\$743,796** total in research projects funded

**6** education grants awarded

**\$229,579** awarded in education grants

# OUR IMPACT

## PVA Celebrates 75th Anniversary with Historic Research Donations

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of Paralyzed Veterans of America, we made two awards of \$750,000 each to support two longtime PVA research partners—the Human Engineering Research Lab (HERL), University of Pittsburgh and the Center for Neuroscience and Regeneration Research, Yale University.

# \$1.5M

donated in FY21 to support  
SCI/D research and technology  
advancements for wheelchair users

## ANNIVERSARY FACTS

In 1974, PVA established foundations that improve the care and treatment of spinal cord injury and disorders. Today, through the PVA Research Foundation, PVA Education Foundation, multiple partnerships, and the Consortium for Spinal Cord Medicine, PVA focuses on exploring treatments and finding a cure for SCI/D.

### Human Engineering Research Lab (HERL)

PVA has supported the HERL program at University of Pittsburgh since its inception in 1994. The HERL mission and vision is to continuously improve the mobility and function of people with disabilities through advanced engineering in clinical research and medical rehabilitation. Their goal is to create a world where all people with disabilities have unencumbered mobility and function so that they can fully participate in and contribute to society.

In this past year alone, HERL Engineers and scientists have embarked on innovative, consumer-driven initiatives including:

- Accessible Autonomous Transportation
- Design and analysis of a Multi-Terrain Wheelchair
- Robotic Assisted Transfer Device
- Mobility Enhancement Robotic Wheelchair (Mebot)
- Origami Inspired Assistive Technology Design
- Identifying unique challenges for women who use wheelchairs
- Robotic Assisted Bed-Wheelchair Transfers

*“It cannot be overstated that the support of PVA allows us to take some risks that could lead to groundbreaking discoveries that would not otherwise be possible because of the conservative nature of government funding. The continued financial support of Paralyzed Veterans of America provides essential resources for transformative research and product development in rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology that improves the lives of Veterans and people with spinal cord injuries and dysfunction and promotes greater inclusivity within everyday activities.”*

Dr. Rory Cooper, Founder and Director, HERL



### Center for Neuroscience and Regeneration Research

PVA partnered with Yale University to build the Neuroscience Center on the campus of the Connecticut VA hospital in 1988. Over the past 43 years we have been a ‘silent partner’ in the world-renowned work at the Neuroscience Center. The goal of their research is to harness the “molecular revolution” to restore function in the injured nervous system. Our objective is to promote functional recovery following spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, stroke, traumatic brain injury and neuropathic pain. Their vision of the future is one in which, as a result of advances in molecular, cellular and regenerative research, the effects of nervous system damage will be substantially mitigated, or completely reversed. As PVA Executive Director Carl Blake noted after a recent visit “When there is a cure for paralysis after spinal cord injury, I believe it will be found at the Neuroscience Center”.

Founder and Director Stephen Waxman, M.D., PhD often comments that the nearly \$10 million dollars that PVA has contributed over the past four decades is worth much more.

The work of the Yale Scientists is futuristic and yet addresses issues that impact Veterans and others living with SCI and MS in their everyday lives including:

- Develop an induced pluripotent stem cell-based “pain-in-a-dish” platform that enables research into why some people are more resilient to pain than others.
- Gene therapy to address spasticity after spinal cord injury
- Live imaging of pain-signaling machinery in nerve injury and disease
- Expanding opportunities toward non-opioid treatments for pain
- Training new neuroscientists to carry on this work into the future.



Stephen Waxman, M.D., PhD

“Every unrestricted PVA dollar allows us to do new, innovative pilot work and other research that may appear risky, but allows us to try new things that eventually bring in other grants and opportunities. Those dollars are worth two or three times their value to our program.”



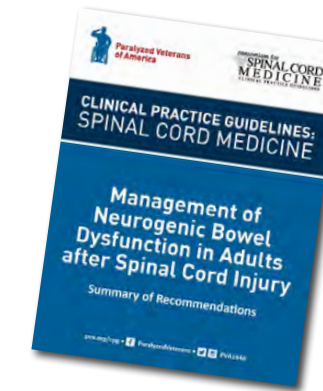
### Clinical Practice Guidelines

For over 25 years, PVA has partnered with the Consortium for Spinal Cord Medicine to develop and publish Clinical Practice Guidelines for Spinal Cord Injury. Paralyzed Veterans of America administers and provides financial support for the Consortium. Thousands of copies of the CPGs and Consumer Guides are disseminated each year throughout the world. The guidelines are used at every phase of care of a Veteran from the emergency department to acute hospitalization, through rehabilitation and by the primary care providers and specialists who provide lifelong care. Adherence to these evidence-based guides promotes access to quality health care and saves lives. Each year over 20 health care practitioners, the best and brightest in their fields, are empaneled to research and develop new guidelines. In FY 21, Paralyzed Veterans of America, in collaboration with the Consortium of SCI Medicine, published two new Clinical Practice Guideline (CPG):

#### Management of Neurogenic Bowel Dysfunction in Adults After Spinal Cord Injury: Clinical Practice Guideline for Health Care Providers

“The appropriate assessment and management of neurogenic bowel dysfunction after spinal cord injury/disorder is truly a multi-disciplinary team process. We hope that this CPG will equip care providers to help individuals with SCI/D optimize their bowel management and subsequently reduce their risk of complications, as well as greatly improve their quality of life.”

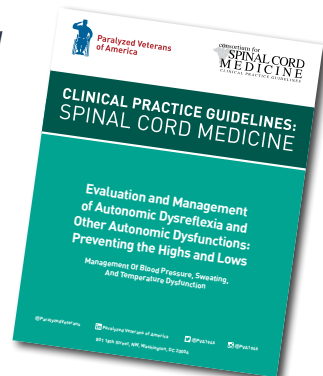
–Jeffery Johns, M.D., Medical Director, Vanderbilt Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital, Nashville, TN, Panel Chair



#### Evaluation and Management of Autonomic Dysreflexia and Other Autonomic Dysfunctions: Preventing the Highs and Lows: Clinical Practice Guideline for Health Care Providers

“Autonomic dysreflexia is common among those with high level spinal cord injury (SCI), with potential life-threatening sequela. Other autonomic dysfunctions such as hyperhidrosis, orthostatic hypotension, and thermal dysregulation can also have a significant impact on the health and quality of life of a person living with SCI. Unfortunately, many health care providers have limited experience working with those with spinal cord injury. With this in mind, this guideline was specifically developed with the latest clinical information and expert opinion to improve the care and quality of life of those with spinal cord injury.”

–Todd Linsenmeyer, M.D., Director of Urology, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, West Orange, New Jersey, Panel Chair



PARAPLEGIA NEWS JULY 2021

# PN

The View From Vegas  
PVA convention recap

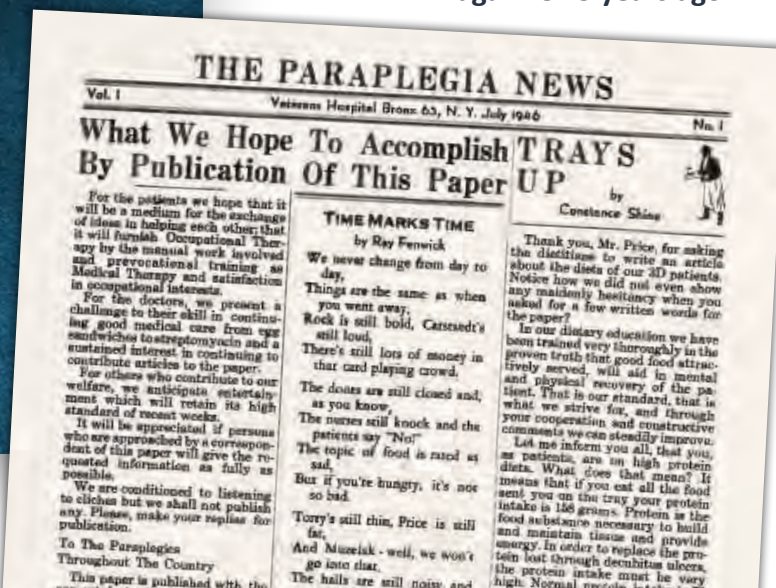
Colorado Gold  
Discover Olympic City USA

75 YEARS  
PN's diamond anniversary

### PN Magazine Turns 75!

PN (Paraplegia News), also celebrating its 75th year in publication, is the official monthly magazine of Paralyzed Veterans of America and is provided free to all PVA members. PN covers news, health, research, lifestyle and issues of interest and concern to Veterans and others with spinal cord injury and disease. PN currently enjoys worldwide readership of 90,000.

Excerpt from the first issue of  
PN Magazine 75 years ago



### Sports 'N Spokes

With its exclusive focus on adaptive sports, *Sports 'N Spokes (S'NS)* now in its 45th year of publication, is the nation's premier magazine for wheelchair sports and recreation primarily for those with spinal cord injury, spina bifida, amputation and some congenital defects. For the last 38 years, S'NS has also sponsored and presented the Junior Athlete of the Year award, which honors the best young wheelchair athlete in the country. *Sport 'N Spokes* is enjoyed by 14,300 readers worldwide.

The Magazine for Wheelchair Sports and Recreation Vol. 47 No. 5

# SPORTS 'N SPOKES

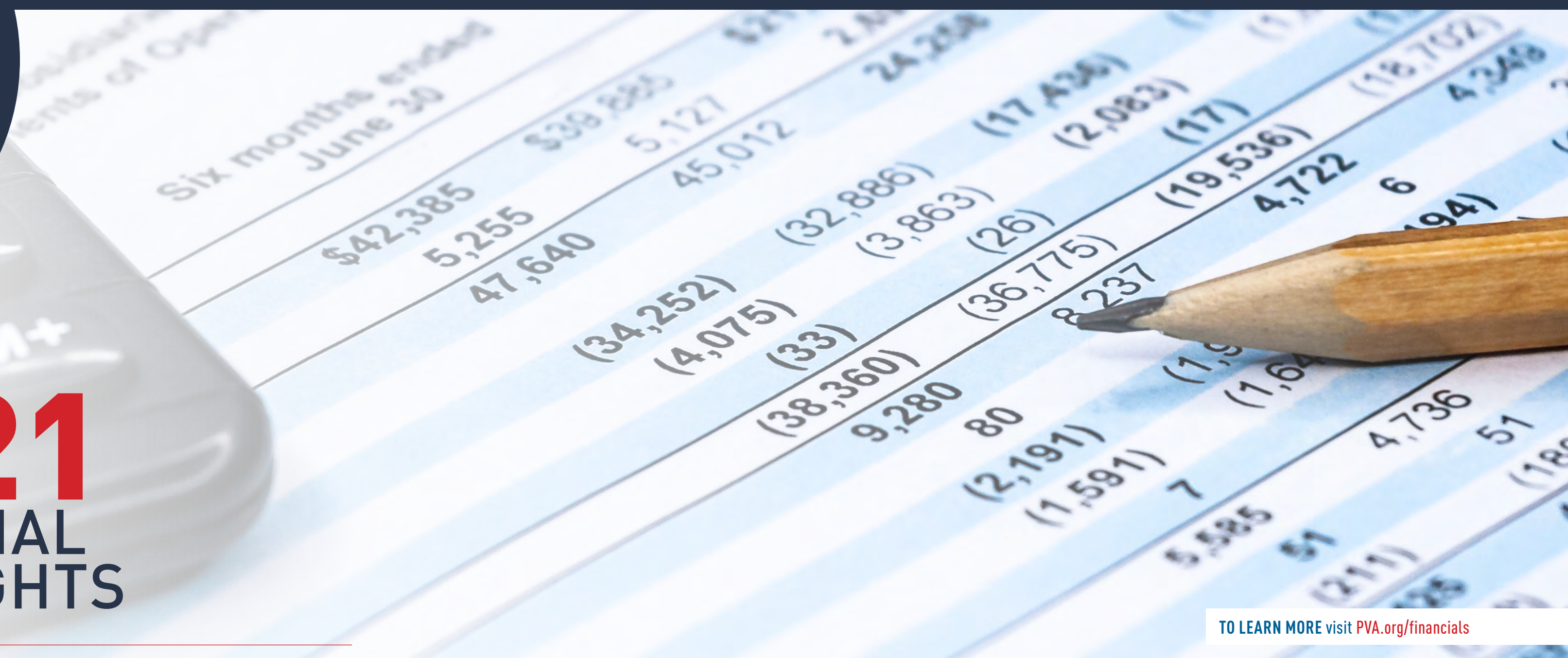
September 2021

**A SLOW PROCESS**  
Women's adaptive sports showing improvement

**WHAT WILL YOU DO?**  
Prepare for an emergency

## Endless Effort

2021 S'NS Junior Athlete of the Year Zachary Carter



# FY21

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

TO LEARN MORE visit [PVA.org/financials](https://PVA.org/financials)

# FY21 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as of 6/30/21\* (\$ in thousands)

Assets		Liabilities	
Cash & cash equivalents	\$15,441	Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$9,527
Contributions and accounts receivable	\$8,669		
Prepaid expenses	\$1,288	Net Assets	
Investments	\$72,643	Without donor restriction	\$90,742
Property and equipment	\$5,539	With donor restriction	\$4,047
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$104,316</b>	<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$104,316</b>

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES OF THE YEAR as of 6/30/21\* (\$ in thousands)

Revenue		Expenses	
Public contributions	\$88,952	Program services	\$106,244
Legacies and bequests	\$14,915	Management and general	\$10,222
Contributed services	\$57,520	Fundraising	\$35,061
Investment income, net	\$13,832	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$151,527</b>
Other income	\$1,610		
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$176,829</b>		

## AFFILIATED ENTITIES as of 6/30/21 (\$ in thousands)

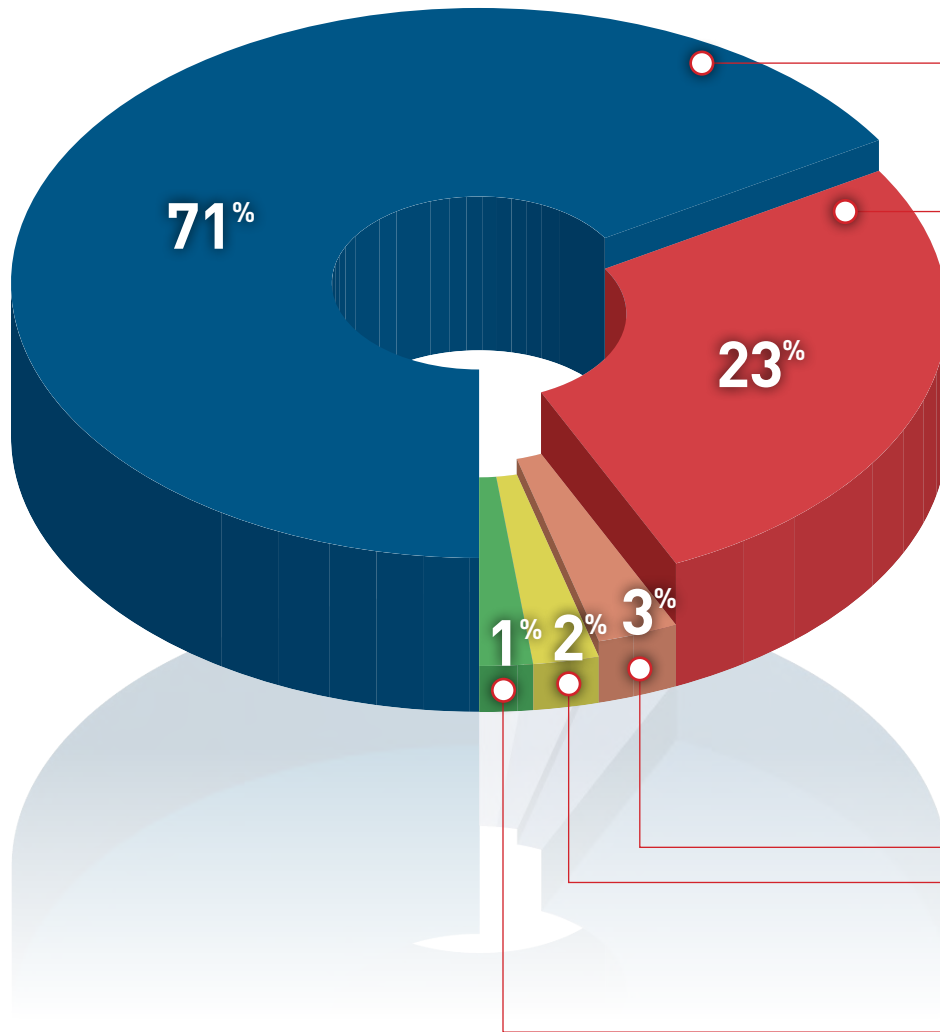
PVA Research Foundation		PVA Education and Training Foundation	
Total assets	\$3,815	Total assets	\$402
Total liabilities	\$596	Total liabilities	\$163
Contributions from PVA	\$270	Contributions from PVA	\$359
Contributions - Other	\$267	Contributions - Other	\$129
Expenses	\$951	Expenses	\$357



\*Includes the consolidated financial information of Paralyzed Veterans of America, PVA Spinal Cord Research Foundation, and PVA Spinal Cord Injury Education and Training Foundation.

## PROGRAM EXPENSE DETAILS

(\$ in thousands)



### ■ PUBLIC EDUCATION & AWARENESS

TV campaigns	\$56,550
Printed campaigns	\$19,497
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$76,047</b>

### ■ MEMBERSHIP & BENEFIT SERVICES

Veteran service offices	\$12,153
Grants to local chapters	\$4,851
Publications	\$1,486
Medical services	\$626
Veteran employment & training services	\$1,117
Other member services	\$3,890
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,123</b>

### ■ RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

PVA Spinal Cord Research Foundation	\$951
PVA SCI Education & Training Foundation	\$347
PVA Healthcare Summit	\$84
Grants to research entities & other support	\$2,117
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,509</b>

### ■ LEGISLATION AND ADVOCACY

Government relations	\$952
Advocacy	\$32
Architecture services	\$690
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,674</b>

### ■ SPORTS AND RECREATION

National Veterans Wheelchair Games	\$7
Other adaptive sports events	\$884
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$891</b>

## LEADERSHIP STAFF

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VA Regional Office  
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Phoenix, AZ

**CALIFORNIA**

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Long Beach, CA

VA Regional Office  
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Spinal Cord Injury Center  
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VA Regional Office  
Sacramento, CA

Spinal Cord Injury Center  
San Diego, CA

VA Regional Office  
San Diego, CA

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VA Regional Office  
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VA Regional Office  
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**FLORIDA**

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VA Medical Center  
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Spinal Cord Injury Center  
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Spinal Cord Injury Outpatient  
Clinic  
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Augusta, GA

VA Regional Office  
Decatur, GA

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Spinal Cord Injury Center  
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Spinal Cord Injury Center  
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