



E-BRIDGE

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



Executive Director's Message

WRITTEN BY KORY AMARAL

I hope everyone is staying warm this Winter. Just a reminder, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter is having elections for the Board of Directors. If you are interested in learning more about the election timeline, please see Page 7. If you are curious in running or you have any questions, please call the office at (650) 399-5296. The deadline to submit nominations is Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

I would like to thank all the PVA members, family members, caregivers and others who attended our Palo Alto Membership Meeting on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 at 12:00 at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. We had a great turnout. Although there is some uncertainty with what is going on with the VA with the new Administration, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter will fight to keep Specialty Care within the VA system. We know our veterans prefer care at the VA and we will be tracking any changes and will keep you updated.

On the last Thursday of the month, the Chapter and the VA Palo Alto Health Care System's SCI/D Center will be continuing our SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch. Each month we have an education topic pertaining to spinal cord injuries or diseases. The next meeting will be Thursday, March 27, 2025. This month's topic will be music. This is also a great way to interact with your fellow veterans. Please refer to Page 2 for more information.

If you need anything, please either call or text me at (650) 399-5296 or email me at amaral@bawpva.org and I will get back to you in a timely manner.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch

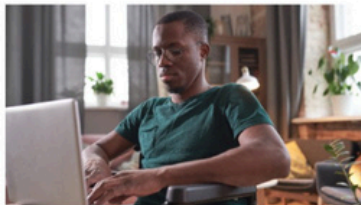
SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM'S SCI/D CENTER



Please join us the **LAST THURSDAY** of the month starting **February 27, 2025** in **Building 7, Room F-108 (Dayroom)** at **12:00 PM** for education and a peer support activity. This is a monthly program designed for SCI/D Veterans to gather together and connect in a social and relaxed environment, socially distanced of course!

If you cannot attend in person, or if group is at capacity, you can call into ZOOM from your room or home.

MEETING ID: 835 1426 6166
PHONE: +1 669 900 9128
ONLINE: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83514266166>



PAO ID65 - Last Updated 2-20-2025

March Calendar

PALO ALTO MEMBERSHIP MEETING
MARCH 4

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER (NSO) MONTHLY CHAT (VIRTUAL)
MARCH 11

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
MARCH 11

PARACORD CLINIC
MARCH 13

BINGO & PIZZA NIGHT
MARCH 20

SCI PEER SUPPORT MENTORING PROGRAM - EDUCATION & LUNCH
MARCH 27

WINTER SPORTS CLINIC
MARCH 30 TO APRIL 6

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Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere (GIVE) Program

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.

The Chapter is hosting a Clothing Drive in the Palo Alto, CA Office. The Chapter is looking to the community to donate lightly used clothing and other items that will directly benefit a veteran. Through the GIVE Program, we would love to expand the program by bringing in more funds for our veterans.

Clothing Donation Program - GIVE

<https://www.pva.org/ways-to-give/g-i-v-e-clothing-donation/>

Car Donation Program

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.

Are you tired of having too many cars or is your car getting old and you are looking to donate it? The Car Donation Program is a program in which we accept vehicles and the proceeds go to our veterans. The process is very simple and veterans from Northern California will benefit from the donation.

Car Donation Program

<https://pva.careasy.org/HOME.html>

GIVE

Generosity can be found anywhere.
Even the back of your closet.

Donating clothes and other household goods can help improve the lives of injured veterans.

Give **GIVE** a try and schedule your **FREE** pickup today.
www.org/givegoods

Paralyzed Veterans of America
National Office

PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America

VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Especially now,
we need your support.

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

Give Today

Image of a white pickup truck towing a silver car on a trailer.

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National PVA's Washington Update

WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Senate Committee Holds Nomination Hearing for VA Deputy Secretary

On February 19, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee held a hearing to consider the nomination of Dr. Paul Lawrence, Ph. D, to be the VA Deputy Secretary. Dr. Lawrence served as the Under Secretary for Benefits (USB) for the last two years of the first Trump Administration, so he is no stranger to VA or the VSO community.

Questioning during the hearing followed current political tones with Democrats focusing on the impact of VA's recent workforce dismissals and Republicans on community care access and streamlining VA benefits and services. Currently, VA has almost one million claims awaiting decisions with 257,000 being considered as part of a "backlog," or claims taking more than 125 days. Dr. Lawrence told lawmakers that his experience as the former USB would be invaluable in reducing the claims backlog. A recording of the hearing is available [here](#).

HVAC Reviews Pending Veterans-Related Bills

On February 25, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a hearing to examine five pieces of veterans-related legislation. One bill, the Restore VA Accountability Act (H.R. 472) seeks to ensure proper accountability at all levels of the VA. PVA's statement for the record noted that throughout the years, there have been unfortunate instances where those serving in leadership positions at the department have failed to fulfill the responsibilities of their positions and steps should have been taken to remove them. We told the committee we believe the VA Secretary should have the ability to remove bad actors from the department; however, we would not support abusing authorities like those in this legislation to arbitrarily remove competent and capable employees simply as a cost-cutting measure or in furtherance of any discriminatory purpose.

A much larger bill, the Veterans' ACCESS Act of 2025 (H.R. 740), would codify current access standards and prevent VA from manipulating wait times in order to limit veterans' access to care in the community. It would establish a defined access standard for the provision of residential substance abuse and mental health treatment, recognizing that when a veteran in an addiction crisis decides that help is needed, time is of the essence. This bill would also require VA to be more transparent with veterans when they are deciding their best options for care, whether at VA or through a community-based provider.

While the overwhelming majority of our members rely on VA's spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D) system of care, PVA supported the Veterans' ACCESS Act but reminded lawmakers that our members choose direct VA for a key reason. Beyond the loss of use of arms and legs, SCI/D can affect other body systems, including skin, bowel, bladder, and breathing. SCI/D demonstrates the interconnectedness of our body's systems, where damage to one part of the body can affect other aspects of it. Because SCI/D has profound and lasting effects, disrupting both physical and neurological functions, having access to a provider who understands the impact on each body system is a vital necessity. Most of VA's community care providers lack the knowledge, expertise, and time to properly understand the impact of SCI/D on body systems. We also expressed concerns about the lack of inpatient mental health and substance use care for veterans with SCI/D who have other care needs, such as bowel and bladder. We called on the committee to include a pilot requiring VA to provide inpatient mental health and substance use care for SCI/D veterans.

Finally, the Student Veteran Benefit Restoration Act of 2025 (H.R. 1391) would restore benefits to students who were using their VA education benefits at an institution of higher learning if they were victims of fraudulent activities, including substantial misrepresentation through advertising, marketing, recruiting, and enrollment practices. We asked the committee to improve the bill by amending its language so the change is applied retroactively, and clarifying which programs would not be eligible for reimbursement. A recording of the hearing and relevant documents can be found [here](#).

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Adaptive Sports Clinic

SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM SCI/D CENTER'S RECREATION THERAPY

THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER
PRESENT

ADAPTIVE SPORTS CLINIC

LIVE CLINIC

2ND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

3:00PM

AIR RIFLE, BOCCIA BALL, DISC. GOLF, INTERACTIVE ARTS, SHUFFLEBOARD, TABLE TENNIS, AND MORE

**RSVP TO KORY AMARAL
(650) 858-3936
AMARAL@BAWPVA.ORG**

BUILDING 7

3801 MIRANDA AVENUE
PALO ALTO, CA 94304

FOOD PROVIDED

THANK YOU SCI/D RECREATION THERAPY IN PALO ALTO FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

PRIZES

Important Links

[AIR ACCESS 30 SHARE STORIES ABOUT YOUR AIR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES AS A PASSENGER WITH A DISABILITY](#)

[PUBLICATIONS VIEW CHAPTER NEWSLETTERS, ANNUAL REPORTS, PVA PUBLICATIONS](#)

[COVID-19 RESOURCES VIEW NATIONAL PVA'S RESOURCES AND UPDATES ON COVID-19](#)

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Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



Bingo & Pizza Night

SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM SCI/D CENTER'S RECREATION THERAPY

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER'S

PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Bay Area & Western Chapter

BINGO NIGHT

3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

SCI/D Dining Room

Bingo at: 3:00pm
Pizza at: 4:30pm

MONEY PRIZES FOR EVERY ROUND!

SCI/D
Spinal Cord Injury/
Disorders Center

Need More Information:
AMARAL@BAWPVA.ORG OR
(650) 858-3936

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Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG)

SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

44TH ANNUAL

NATIONAL VETERANS
WHEELCHAIR GAMES

PLAY STRONG

MINNEAPOLIS, MN
JULY 17-22, 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
WHEELCHAIRGAMES.ORG
#WHEELCHAIRGAMES

CO-PRESENTED BY:

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs PVA Paralyzed Veterans of America

Member Column

ELECTIONS FY 25-27

2025 ELECTION TIMELINE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2025
NOMINATIONS OPENED

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025
DEADLINE TO SEND OUT
NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS
AND ELECTION PROCEDURES

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025
NOMINATIONS CLOSED,
DEADLINE TO RECEIVE
NOMINATIONS BY MAIL

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025
DEADLINE TO HAVE
CERTIFICATIONS COMPLETED

FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 2025
DEADLINE TO MAIL BALLOTS
AND BIOS

FRIDAY, MAY 2, 2025
C.O.B. DEADLINE TO RECEIVE
BALLOTS

FRIDAY, MAY 2, 2025
COUNT BALLOTS WITH 3
VOLUNTEERS

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025
ANNOUNCE RESULTS OF
ELECTION

TUESDAY, JULY 1, 2025
NEW TERM OF OFFICE BEGINS

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About Us

THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) is a nonprofit, veterans service organization located in Palo Alto, CA. BAWPVA serves spinal cord injured and/or dysfunction veterans located in Northern California, Northern Nevada and the Pacific Islands. BAWPVA is one of 33 chapters of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) located across the United States. Currently, BAWPVA has 541 members, but sees over 1,000 paralyzed veterans at the SCI/D Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) services provide direct support to the Chapter's programs. BAWPVA sponsors various events and adaptive sports clinics at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System in Palo Alto, CA, VA Northern California Health Care System, VA Central California Health Care System, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System and VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.

If you are interested in membership, volunteering, or donating please contact us today.

Our office is located at:

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Building 7 Rm. E-118
Palo Alto, CA 94304

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Palo Alto, CA 94304-0027

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