

Spring  
2023

## ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWSLETTER





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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### President's Letter

Hi Everyone! I hope you are all doing well and starting to enjoy slightly longer days. Spring means a couple of things – getting ready for the National Convention, the Annual Wheelchair Games and the thing I dread most - Spring cleaning. But hey, all three are going to happen and with 2 of the 3 being really fun, I think that's a win.

It was interesting to sit down and start writing my regular President's report for this newsletter. Given where we have been and the clean-up we've had to do, I've always felt the need to demonstrate to you all that we are making positive changes, that we actually have a lot going on and that we have started righting the ship financially. Well, no more. We continue to do all these things but since going off of monitoring two years ago, I think it's safe to say we are in a healthy position as a chapter, and I don't think I need to convince you that we are moving in the right direction.

We have a tremendous number of things going on with the chapter and across all of the states that make up our chapter. However, one thing that is missing is YOU. We need your participation; we need your ideas and we need you get involved. We don't need you every day or every week and honestly, not even every month. But we do need you to do something.

We have added a second Bingo operation on Thursdays in Aurora close to the office. This will allow us to hopefully increase our Stepping Out grants and our SCI-D staff scholarships. We have new sporting events taking place and there are others that are shaking off 2+ years of Covid fatigue. And we have a need for some of you to step up as Peer Mentors to talk with our brothers and sisters who find themselves in a similar position as you and have no idea of what to expect. Even making a few calls to check in on fellow members would be a tremendous help to the chapter.

Thanks and I hope to see you soon!!

Izzy



## NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Greetings to everyone in the Mountain States Chapter. Unfortunately, I'm starting with something that should make your blood boil and which highlights the need and importance of the work we all do together at PVA.

On February 17<sup>th</sup> of this year one of the most shameful events took place and one which reflects what many of us with our disabilities encounter on a regular basis. I'm sad to say this was in my hometown of Denver Colorado. Chris Hinds, a candidate for mayor in Denver, had to drag himself across the stage to deliver his remarks. Had he not appeared on stage, his campaign would have been penalized for not participating and he would have to forgo public campaign funds.

Really – in 2023. In an urban setting. It's not like he's trying to get into a grain silo though my experience in my youth, a farm would have been better equipped and at least been able to improvise a lift or ramp.

This is why the work being done by PVA is so important. Its why our advocacy on the Hill is so vital. Its why we need you to help out and call/email your elected officials at all levels. Personally, I'm sick of hearing of people having to drag themselves down the aisle of an airplane, of candidates like Mr. Hinds being humiliated as he struggles across a stage and of venues putting us out of the way so we are not obstructing others.

As I write this, our brothers and sisters are on the Hill advocating for all of us and the entire disability community and they need our help. Write, call or email and help us as we address some of the important issues we all face.

Thank you.

President and National Director  
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## LEGISLATION

For the 1st time in three years PVA hosted their annual Advocacy/Legislation Seminar in person in Arlington, Virginia from February 27 to March 2. Over 100 advocates (mostly member volunteers) traveled to participate in this important event which also included a profound testimony by PVA's National President, Charles Brown and individual visits to Capitol Hill.

PVA's Government Relations staff did a splendid job of carefully articulating priorities for Congressional members (and their key staff members). We in turn navigated the halls congress which were only reopened just a couple of weeks prior to our arrival. There is something extremely powerful to witness droves of PVA members in wheelchairs and other assistive devices hitting the offices and "Storming the Hill" to share our heart and need for their consideration of what will make our lives better and speak on behalf of so many who have no voice.



These include:

1. Protecting Access to VA's specialized Health Care Services (**S. 10 VA CAREERS Act & S. 42 BUILD of Veterans Act**)
2. Expand Access to VA Long-Term Services and Supports (**H.R. 542/S. 141 Elizabeth Dole Home and Community Based Services for Veterans and Caregivers Act**)
3. Improve Veterans and Survivors Benefits (**H.R. 303 Retired Pay Restoration Act; H.R. 333 Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act; S. 344 Major Richard Star Act; and S. 414 Caring for Survivors Act**)



We also are concerned with many other topics including Access to home modifications, improving access to air travel, and improving employment prospects for veterans with disabilities. Details on these and other policy priorities can be found at [pva.org](http://pva.org) or [#PushingAccessForward](https://twitter.com/PushingAccessForward).

I enjoyed meeting with many staffers and particularly Freshman Colorado Representative Brittany Pettersen, who serves District 7, which covers many areas including my home in Golden.

The opportunity for more PVA members and their families to also get involved is available. We could certainly use everyone's effort and if you are interested, please reach out to Laura Gibson at the chapter office. While I traveled to the DC metro area for this event, please know that local offices can be visited and/or virtual meetings can be set up as well.

Sincerely,

Tom Wheaton



## VA CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

BY

Aaron Stevens, PVA Senior Benefits Advocate  
Cleveland, Ohio VA Medical Center's SCI Unit

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) offers a benefit to qualifying veterans called a clothing allowance. Veterans who use a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance such as a wheelchair, due to a service-connected condition may receive this annual monetary benefit. The allowance is also available to veterans who have a skin condition that requires physician prescribed medication that may permanently stain clothing.

To be eligible for this benefit, your prosthetic or orthopedic device, or your skin medication, must cause damage to your clothing. In addition, the device or medication must be due to a service-connected condition. Both must be true to establish eligibility for this allowance.

If you meet the above criteria, you will be eligible for an annual payment of \$968.52. This amount is subject to change each year. The payments are made to eligible veterans between September 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.

To apply for the clothing allowance, you must complete a VA form 10-8678. It will need to be completed, signed, and sent to your local National Service Officer who can review and forward to the VA Medical Center, or the VA Medical Center Prosthetics Department.

To get your yearly payment, you'll need to qualify by August 1 of that year. You may be eligible to get more than one clothing allowance payment if you meet at least one of the requirements listed below.

**At least one of these must be true:**

- ✦ You have more than one prosthetic or orthopedic device, or
- ✦ You have more than one skin medicine, and/or
- ✦ Your device or skin medicine affects more than one type of clothing.

If you have any questions about the clothing allowance, please make sure to reach out to your local PVA Service Office who are there to assist you with your VA benefits and answer your questions.

***The preceding article was adapted from an original composed by Aaron Stevens, PVA Senior Benefits Advocate located at the Cleveland, Ohio VA Medical Center's Spinal Cord Injury Unit.***

# VA



# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs





In the community of Franktown Colorado there is a small private school by the name of Trinity Lutheran School. This school has about 90 eager students, that joy volunteering their time and resources to the community. Their project for the 2022—2023 school year is with Mountain States Chapter PVA and Rocky Mountain Veterans Hospital.

The kids made over 350 gift bags for the SCI/D Unit and in patients at the VA for Thanksgiving and 475 for Christmas. These bags where loaded with snacks, cards, socks, handwarmers, candy and home made bracelets. The gift bags where all hand delivered to each patients at the VA, any extra was given to the VSO for other VA projects. They also raised over \$500.00 for the calming dog project.



Their last project for the year will benefit the Women's Baby Shower program at the VA. This program will host a baby shower for our expectant female Veterans, which help purchase diapers, formula and other newborn baby items.

A special Thank you to Trinity Lutheran School for all their hard work and commitment to our Veterans.

TRINITY LUTHERAN SCHOOL YOU ARE  
AWESOME!!



# What happening!



**Disc Golf Camp**  
**June 3, 2023**  
**Where: to be announced**  
**In a flyer**

**Pickleball Camp**  
**August**  
**Where: to be announced**  
**In a flyer**



**NATIONAL VETERANS**  
**WHEELCHAIR GAMES**  
**JULY 4-9TH**  
**PORTLAND, OR**

**Rendezvous**  
**Awards**  
**Banquet**  
**August 26, 2023**  
**Where: more info**



**Christmas Party**  
**December 16, 2023**  
**Where: to be announced**





# GET INVOLVED



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Mountain States Chapter

Do you have 1 Thursday a  
month to give to your  
Chapter?

Come play  
Bingo

## Mountain States Chapter needs your help!!

At the request of the membership we are doing a  
Bingo Fundraiser  
right here in Aurora. To make this a success  
**WE NEED YOUR HELP**

We are looking for a few members to commit to  
1 day month  
on a Thursday from 10am to 2pm.

TURN OF THE CENTURY  
BINGO HALL  
1921 S HAVANA ST  
AURORA, CO 80014

CALL LAURA AT THE OFFICE

303-597-0038

OR

909-208-3635 CELL



BINGO IN THE SPRINGS  
CONGRATULATION TO MISS. VERLYN.  
SHE WON THE PROGRESSIVE JACKPOT  
\$8900.80



The Mountain States Chapter PVA currently publishes the newsletter 4 times per year, and is hoping to increase publications to every other month for 6 volumes in 2023. We would like to invite our PVA members, Associate Members, and business associates to help support the Newsletter Booster Program. Your name will be published in each 2023 newsletter (unless otherwise specified) for only \$10.00. Please help defray the cost of publishing by supporting **YOUR** Chapter. Got an idea for an article? Drop us an email: [info@mscpva.org](mailto:info@mscpva.org) with the subject "newsletter article idea" and someone will get back with you shortly.

### NEWSLETTER BOOSTER PROGRAM

**I wish to make the following donation to the Newsletter Booster Program:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Amount of donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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