Back Talk

April / May
2013

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2014 Mid-Winter Board of Directors Meeting

Kenny Lloyd, IPVA National Director (left) and Charles Brown, PVA National Vice President (right)
A Message From The President
Jon R. Schneider

New Veterans Health at Home Guide Booklet Available

Please be aware that a new VA Veterans Health Care at Home Guide book is now available at our chapters office for members.

As part of the VA’s commitment to your health, VA is happy to make available to you a copy of Veterans Health at Home. Thousands of veterans and their families have shown a strong desire to partner with their caregivers in making informed and effective use of VA’s healthcare system. It is hoped this guide will help you to get the best care available at the right time and place.

How and when should you use this guide?
1. When you need emergency care.
2. How and when to treat a problem at home.
3. When to call or see your doctor or counselor.

It should be noted that preparation is key to handling common health problems and emergencies. In the 431 pages of Veterans’ Health at Home book you will find practical ideas on the prevention and treatment of illness and injuries. This guide can also help you sort out those physical, mental, and emotional changes that are a normal part of aging and those that merit a closer look.

We want to thank the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for the development of this vital guide and making it available to our IPVA members and other Veterans.

Please call our chapter office at 515-277-4782 if you would like to receive a copy of the book.

JRS

ATTENTION

1. Please check out our new and improved web page! Many items of interest will be posted frequently. This will bring you news about the chapter between newsletters. It is a work in progress, but you will find it very interesting and informative. www.iowapva.org.

2. Please provide us with your email address. We would like to provide you your newsletter and other information electronically. This will make it easier for you and less expensive for us.
This year’s Mid-Winter Board of Directors meeting was held in Arlington, Virginia. The meeting was to be held in conjunction with the Advocacy Legislation Seminar which would enable the National Directors to go to the capital with the government relations people. Kim Gould, our Executive Director was already in Virginia at the Advocacy Legislation Seminar and we were planning to go up to the capital together but Mother Nature had other plans. They were calling for a snowstorm and Washington DC was shut down. We had the day off but with the snow and cold there was nowhere to go.

The next day we got down to business hearing reports and listening to our guest speaker Congressman Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs. Congressman Miller took the time to take questions from the National Directors which rarely happens. Most of our speakers give us a speech and usually don’t have time for questions. Later the National Directors awarded the Speedy Awards to John Bollinger in the member category and Robert Nelson in the nonmember category.

The following day we were ready to start resolutions. Some of the resolutions that passed this year were the fiscal year will now end on July 1 starting in 2014. Our meeting dates of Convention and Mid-Winter Board meetings will change and GSA Per Diem rate will now be used instead of keeping receipts.

In March I attended the Easter Seals “Rural Solutions” seminar in Des Moines. I was amazed at the equipment that was there to help farmers with getting in and out of their tractors. A farmer from northwest Iowa brought his ¾ ton pickup to show the participants how he manages to get in and out of the equipment he needs to run to accomplish getting his farming done. His pickup was rigged with outriggers and a lift mounted behind the cab of the pickup. The lift behind the cab would swivel around to the front door of the pickup and let him transfer from the pickup to a seat in the lift. He would put down his outriggers before he started bringing the lift to the height of the tractor and then telescope out to the inside of the tractor. He could also control this lift with a remote control. After he was seated in his tractor, he telescope the lift back to its original position. This pickup could be used for several things as it can lift you to the height at which most ladders are used. He could also transport an action track wheelchair around on the back of his pickup. The action track chair allowed him to check his cattle or hogs anywhere he needed to around the farm without worrying about getting stuck. Easter Seals helped design the adaptive equipment for this farmer and other farmers around the state. They will help design what each particular farmer will need for equipment to successfully maintain their farms.
No More Prosthetics Delays: Time For Action!
By Sherman Gillums Jr., Associate Executive Director of Veterans Benefits

Two years ago, when a veteran received a customized wheelchair, porch lift, or some other "durable medical equipment" from VA prosthetics, chances are the consult or request went from a clinician or therapist to a prosthetics purchase agent, who either put out a competitive bid to vendors or ordered from a reliable major vendor, such as Invacare or Sunrise Medical. While the process was not 100 percent flawless, the veteran generally received the life-critical items without excessive delay. So when VA decided to transition how it acquires prosthetics by placing limits on the use of "Title 38 authority" and open more government contract opportunities to veteran-owned and small businesses, it would foreseeably and disproportionately impact PVA members, most of which rely on high-cost prosthetics more than any other segment of the veteran population. Before getting into the details of the new policy and its impacts, readers should fully understand Title 38 authority and what it means to limit its application. Title 38 of the United States Code, section 8123, grants VA authority to procure prosthetics and services in any manner "the Secretary may determine to be proper without regard to any other provision of law." When exercising this authority VA may "procure prosthetic appliances and necessary services required ...by purchase, manufacture, contract, or in such other manner as the Secretary [of VA] may determine to be proper" [emphasis added].

Why is this important for PVA members to understand? This flexibility was granted to ensure that veterans with disabling conditions received devices and supplies that met their clinical needs. It also permitted VA to limit bidding competition when physicians require specific devices or equipment for patient care. The Federal Acquisition Register and VA Acquisition Register, the primary directives for the procurement of VA prosthetics, further sanction this intent. What has seemingly happened though is a decreased emphasis on the needs of veterans in order to meet small business quotas and cut budget corners. As the Veterans Health Administration continues updating its policies and directives to guide clinical and procurement staff on the interpretation of Section 8123, PVA's concern is whether the intent of the statute will reflect a shift from a focus on patients to price tags, and veterans will see more and more instances of delayed or denied prosthetics orders. Now if this new process works as intended, a consultant or prescription submitted by a service provider goes to the local prosthetics purchase agent. If the cost exceeds the statutory "micro-purchase" limit of $3,000 (as most customized wheelchairs, patient lifts, etc. do), the request is forwarded to a network contracting agent. The contracting agent will solicit bids from vendors, the vendor will deliver the product, and the veteran can get on with life. The order seamlessly moves through the process in a timely manner. The clinical details of the order do not get questioned or modified by contract representatives bearing no clinical expertise. The chosen vendor is capable of meeting the time and spec requirements of the bid. That is what is supposed to happen under the new process. But here is what actually happened to a couple of PVA members:

A veteran with terminal, service-connected ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) and his elderly wife were prescribed a whole house generator in order to keep his ventilator working in the event of a power outage. VA prosthetics delayed the request by referring it to a Major Medical Equipment Committee, which demanded that the veteran produce 4 years of records from the electric company and his spouse's health records to substantiate the claim. PVA sought the intervention of the VISN Director, after which the request was immediately approved. The same veteran was later prescribed an artificial ventilator but died 10 days after the equipment order was submitted. Records show the prosthetics chief sat on the request for a week, deciding whether she should rent or buy the equipment. When questioned, she answered there are no established timeframes for procurement and delivery of such devices in instances of terminal illness.

A veteran with quadriplegia had his power chair ordered on August 15, 2012 by an SCI physical therapist. VA medical notes show that the order sat idle for about 4 weeks before being sent to the VISN contract office. The responsible contract representative sought three vendor bids then inexplicably closed the order after receiving none. The NSO contacted the VISN Prosthetics Representative (VPR) to find out why the order was delayed. The VPR attributed the breakdown to miscommunication between the VAMC and contracting, after which she directed her staff to bypass the system to procure the wheelchair locally. Two more orders were discovered to have similarly sat for 3-4 weeks before submission to contracting.

Stories such as these are becoming more common around the country. Although larger procurements like powered wheelchairs and porch lifts represent a small percentage of the total workload for the VA, they also represent the most critical equipment needed by the majority of PVA's members. Delays in these procurements prove costly to both the government, in terms of unnecessarily extended hospital stays while awaiting equipment, and to veterans, in terms of lost independence and quality of life.

Disheartening is the fact that PVA saw this coming and voiced these concerns to VA leadership well before the changes to the process were implemented. As predicted, the process has become broken for far too many veterans who depend on prosthetics items to function. In response, PVA has embarked upon a concerted, nationwide effort to aggressively confront these delays and make the case to VA leaders that immediate action must be taken to fix it. In order to do this, we need to track how often delays occur and tell the personal stories of the consequences. Thus, PVA members should immediately notify their local PVA National Service Officer of delays in the receipt of major prosthetics items, particularly when they result in longer hospital stays. Members may also notify the Veterans Benefits Department National office by phone at 866-734-0857 (TTY: 800-795-4327) or by e-mail at info@pva.org.
From the Desk of the Executive Director

Kim Gould

2013 Advocacy/Legislation Seminar

I had the opportunity to represent the Iowa Chapter at this year’s National PVA Advocacy/Legislation Seminar in Washington, DC March 4–7. For the first two days, we were briefed on the issues listed below and provided with the position of PVA. Following these two days of briefings, I had meetings scheduled with US Senators Tom Harkin and Charles Grassley and US Representatives Tom Latham, Dave Loebsack, Bruce Braley and Steve King. As Kenny Lloyd stated in his article, mother nature had other plans in the form of a snow storm which shut down all of Washington DC on one day of visits, but I was able to visit with all of the Senators and Congressmen (or their aides) on the remaining day. I was very impressed with the knowledge these legislators and their aides demonstrated regarding veterans issues. They were very interested in what I had to say and the position of PVA. It was a very educational and enjoyable experience. The National PVA staff did an excellent job of preparing us on presenting these very important veterans issues.

- Pass the 2014 VA Budget and Provide Advance Appropriations for 2015
- Provide Oversight of the VA Prosthetics Programs (See article on page 4)
- Provide Pro-Creative Services for Catastrophically Disabled Veterans
- Improve Travel Benefits for Severely Disabled Veterans
- Transfer the Administration of the Department of Labor’s Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) to the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Protection of Specialized Services (Such As Spinal Cord Dysfunction Care) As Part of the Core Mission and Responsibility of the VA
- PVA Opposes H.R.203 (Pool Safe Act) Which Would Prohibit Enforcement of the ADA on Pool Access for One Year After It’s Enactment
- PVA Calls for Senate Ratification of the CRPD (Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities) Treaty. This Treaty is Modeled After the ADA. Countries That Ratify the Treaty Agree to Ensure and Promote Human Rights and Freedoms for All Persons With Disabilities.
- PVA Opposes Social Security COLA Reform (Calculated on “Chained CPI”)

If anyone has any questions on any of these issues, please do not hesitate to call me.

Kim

DISCLAIMER

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Back Talk is a publication of the Iowa PVA and is meant to inform its readers of Chapter activities, legislation, and other matters of concern to veterans and/or members of the disability community. Any opinions expressed in any article is that of the author and may not reflect the beliefs or policies of the Iowa Chapter.

Thank you.
PVA EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

2013-2014 PVA Educational Scholarship Program,
April 1 - June 17

Purpose

The Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) primary goal has been to assist its members and their families in improving the quality of their lives.

This goal has been addressed through a variety of activities, including the establishment of the Educational Scholarship Program. This program assists PVA members and their immediate family members by providing scholarship funds to help with a post-secondary education.

PVA will award scholarships in the amount of $1,000 to full-time students and $500 to part-time students for an academic year.

Eligibility

Applicant must be either a PVA member, the spouse of a PVA member, or an unmarried child (under 24 years of age) who is dependent (as defined by the IRS) on the member for principal support.

Applicant must be a citizen of the United States.

Applicant must be accepted and enrolled as a full-time or part-time student in an accredited US college or university.

Previous award recipients may apply.

Submission Process

Individuals who wish to apply for the scholarship program can download the application at www.pva.org or request an application be mailed to them via phone (800) 424-8200 Ext. 776, or via e-mail christi@pva.org. Completed applications MUST be returned to PVA NO LATER THAN June 17, 2013. Late applications will not be accepted, no exceptions. In addition, any incomplete applications will not be considered.

For more details, please visit www.pva.org

SUPPORT THE IOWA PVA

The Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America relies solely on private donations and receives NO government funding! Your contribution is 100% tax deductible, as we are a 501(c)(3) corporation. Support by individual donors and businesses enable us to make our services FREE to members. Please support our mission through a direct donation to:

Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America (Iowa PVA)
3703 1/2 Douglas Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50310

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- 24 Hour Emergency Service

- Toll-Free: (877) 543 - 8826
- Email: rods@iowamobility.com
- Website: www.iowamobility.com
General Information:
The Paralyzed Veterans of America Iowa Chapter Trapshoot Competition will take place at the Otter Creek Sportsman’s Club June 28th thru June 30th 2013. The $185 entry fee covers the cost of 300 targets and shells (100 Singles, 50 doubles and 100 Handicap), 2 lunches (served at the gun club), and 1 ticket for the Awards Banquet (additional banquet tickets may be purchased for $30 each and additional lunch tickets for $10 each). If ammunition is taken, it must be used during the competition. Refunds will be made for emergencies only.

Questions can be directed to David Graham (660) 868-0097 or Kenny Llloyd (515) 570-1402. email: iowapvasports@yahoo.com

Accommodations:
The host hotel is the Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham, located at 4444 Czech Lane NE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402. Teron Townsend (assistant manager) (319)294-8700. A block of rooms is available for this event at $99 a night (at a reduced rate with more event guests) plus state and local hotel taxes. This hotel provides a buffet style breakfast for guests. Contact Teron and identify yourself as a participant in the Iowa PVA trapshoot. Cut off for the room block is June 1, 2013. PLEASE understand that if you miss the deadline you may be subject to a higher rate. Please reserve your room as soon as possible.

Transportation:
Transportation can be provided from the Eastern Iowa Regional Airport to the Hotel. (Please contact David Graham to make arrangements). The Chapter will provide transportation from the hotel to the gun club on a first come basis. If you are needing transportation during the event, please let us know prior to June 15th, 2013.

Questions can be directed to David Graham (660) 868-0097 or Kenny Llloyd (515) 570-1402. email: iowapvasports@yahoo.com

Chapter Trapshoot
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
June 28-30th 2013

Registration:
Please make checks payable to Iowa PVA and mail it along with this Registration Form to: Iowa Chapter PVA 3703 1/2 Douglas Ave. Des Moines, Iowa 50310.

Name
Address
City/State
Zip
Telephone #
Email

PVA Member ______ Chapter ______
Wheelchair Shooter ______ Chapter Team ______

What are your Averages and Handicap Yardage?
Singles ______ Doubles ______ YDG ______

Please bring ATA/PITA cards with you.

Squad/Position Requests—Indicate Below:
1)
2)
3)
4)
5)

I will need:
Shotgun: Yes____ N0____
Pouch: Yes____ No____
Earplugs: Yes____ No____

_____ I plan to attend Friday’s Welcome Dinner

Entry Fee (includes one Banquet ticket) $185 $185

Total number of Extra Banquet Tickets ___x$30____

Number of Extra Lunch Tickets ___x$10____

Calcutta $10____

Singles Silent Partner $10____

Handicap Silent Partner $10____

Total $______
Ride To Live

Benefit Ride

June 1, 2013

$10.00 per person
Ride will start in Blairstown, Iowa
Registration 9:30-10:30
Bike Blessing @10:30
First bike 11:00
Lunch at first stop
Proceeds go to Paralyzed Veterans of America and American Legion in Blairstown, in honor of Fred “Whitey” Christensen
Silent Auction at the last stop
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
IOWA CHAPTER

LIFE ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

DATE:________________
NAME:_________________________________________________________
ADDRESS:_______________________________________________________
CITY/STATE/ZIP:__________________________________________________
HOME PHONE:___________________________ WORK PHONE:__________________________
CELL PHONE:____________________________ EMAIL ADDRESS:_________________________

Please check any of the following volunteer activities that you may be interested in:

_____ Sports Programs  _____ Family Time Activities
_____ VAMC Programs  _____ Fund Raising Activities
_____ Public Relations Events  _____ Other (please detail in comments section)

COMMENTS:_______________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

Lifetime Associate Membership Fee: $75.00

Please return this application and payment to the Iowa PVA at the following address:

Iowa PVA
3703 1/2 Douglas Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50310-5347
(515-277-4782)

Associate Member Signature:______________________________________________________________
### Cookbooks

The cookbooks have arrived and are going like hotcakes!!!!!!
With every donation of at least $20.00, you will receive a free cookbook. Please send your donation directly to our office at:

**Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America**
3703 1/2 Douglas Ave.
Des Moines, IA  50310

### Associate Membership Drive

Please consider becoming an Associate Member of Iowa Paralyzed Veterans of America. Simply fill out the Associate Membership Application found on Page 10 of this issue and mail it with a check for $75.00 to our office. Applicants for Associate Membership will receive a free cookbook and a gift card to be redeemed for one pie at Village Inn.

Be sure to include the address you would like your gifts sent to.
Thank you!!!!!!!!!
CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

5/9 - Bingo at the Des Moines VA CLC - 6:30 p.m.
5/10 - Des Moines Caregivers Day
5/15 - Hospital Liaison Site Visit at the Des Moines VA - 9:30 a.m.
5/16 - IPVA Board of Directors Meeting at the IPVA Office - 1:00 p.m.
5/19 - IPVA Bowling Event at Plaza Lanes - Check-in at 10:30 a.m.
5/23 - Hospital Liaison Site Visit at the Iowa City VA - 9:00 a.m.

6/1 - “Ride To Live” Benefit Ride in Blairstown, IA
6/8 - 6/15 - “Castaway Disabilities Fishing Event” in Ely, MN
6/11 - Iowa Veterans Council Meeting at the IPVA Office - 1:00 p.m.
6/13 - Bingo at the Des Moines VA CLC - 6:30 p.m.
6/20 - IPVA Board of Directors Meeting at the IPVA Office - 1:00 p.m.
6/28 - 6/30 - Iowa Chapter Trapshoot in Cedar Rapids, IA
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Your Life. Your Ride.™
Adaptive Sports Iowa continues to host weekly wheelchair Basketball pickup games in Ankeny. The games are held at the First Family Church located at 317 SE Magazine Road. The facility is reserved from 6-8 p.m. every Thursday night. Adaptive Sports Iowa will have six sports chairs on site. There is no cost to participate. Come out and enjoy the fun.
Dear Members of Spinal Cord Injury Association of Iowa,

The University of Iowa Physical Therapy Department is recruiting subjects for their studies on people who have spinal cord injury. The lab is one of the top funded research institutions in the United States for spinal cord injury by National Institute of Health and Veterans Administration. A large variety of research projects are underway, many of which can be home based. They do not require frequent trips to Iowa City. Compensation is frequently provided.

I encourage you to consider contacting Amy Kimball (see information below) to learn more about the research being conducted.....and participate! The goal is to develop effective interventions for health professionals working with people after sustaining a spinal cord injury. Dr. Rich Shields is well known for examining novel methods for improving muscle and bone mass despite spinal cord injury. The studies cover a broad scope and are not limited to a recently injured individual.

Amy L. Kimball, MPT, ATC  
PhD Student, Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science  
Neuromuscular Research/Motor Control Laboratory  
Carver College of Medicine  
University of Iowa 1-151 Medical Education Building  
Phone: 319-353-4242  
Email: kimballa@healthcare.uiowa.edu  
http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/pt/  
Thank you for your time.

Marcie  
Spinal Cord Injury Association of Iowa Board Member

Marcie Becker, PT, DPT  
Adjunct Associate  
Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Sciences  
Carver College of Medicine  
University of Iowa  
Medical Education Building  
Iowa City, IA 52242-1190  
(319) 335-9792  
(319) 335-9707 (fax)

On The Brink by Steven Brinkmeyer

We were busy this week. I had some appointments at the local VA Central Iowa Health Care System in Des Moines. (The price of freedom is visible there.) The chancre mechanic at the spinal cord injury/disability department said, "You are in pretty good condition for the condition you are in." I was happy to hear that--I guess.

On the way home from one of the trips my wife said, "Sometimes I find the VA place just a little depressing." I said, "Me too. Let's stop at one of the malls and seek out some retail therapy." When we got back on the road she felt better than I did. You see, it's really hard to find fishing tackle in a dress shop.

The discussion question at last week's meeting of my Thursday Afternoon Reading Club was: Spring is when a man's fancy turns to what he thinks about all year long anyway. True or false?
IOWA PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
3703 1/2 Douglas Avenue
Des Moines, IA  50310

Return Service Requested

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(615) 277-4782

WHEELCHAIR AWARENESS
BOWL-A-THON
SUNDAY, MAY 19

Choose your teams NOW!
Gather friends, family, co-workers
and have fun while experiencing what it’s like to bowl from a
WHEELCHAIR!

$80 per Team or $20 per Individuals

*Each bowler plays 2 games (in a wheelchair) of 9 pin no tap.*
*We will provide the wheelchairs, some pointers and some laughter!*  
*This will give you some insight on problems faced by wheelchair users.*
*Trophies, Pizza, Soda, Raffles*

WHERE: Plaza Lanes
2701 Douglas Ave.
Des Moines, IA

WHEN: Sunday, May 19
CHECK IN:  10:30 a.m.
START TIME:  11:00 a.m.
ENTRY DEADLINE:  May 13

Company Name:____________________________________________________

Address: ___________________________________ City:_________ ST:_____ Zip:__________

Contact Name:________________________________ Phone:_____________________

____ Yes, we want to enter a Team, our $80 is enclosed.
____ Yes, we want to Sponsor a Team, please provide bowlers to
represent us, our $80 is enclosed.
____ No, but would like to contribute a tax deductible donation.
____ Yes, I want to participate (individual), my $20 is enclosed.

Please make checks payable to: Iowa Chapter PVA

The Iowa Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America is a Non-profit 501(c) 3 organization whose
mission is to improve the quality of life for veterans of the US Armed Forces and others who have a
spinal cord injury or disease.

ARE YOU MOVING?!?!

Don’t forget to notify the office of your new address. If you are a PVA member, we will let National PVA and
PN PARAPLEGIA NEWS know where you are moving to, so you won’t miss a single issue.

Call us at 888-909-4782.