On August 23, 2017, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 was signed into law. The new law takes effect on February 19, 2019. This new law changes the VA appeal process and decision notification requirements. VA’s final rule was published by the Federal Register on January 18, 2019.

AMA is a complete overhaul of our current appeal process which will now be referred to as “Legacy Appeals”. There will no longer be a traditional Notice of Disagreement to the VA Regional Office, Statement of Case, VA Form 9, and certification to the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). There will be three new forms to use if a veteran disagrees with a VA decision.

If a veteran disagrees with a VA decision, they will have three options, or lanes to choose from:

- **Supplemental Claim** - Replaces “reconsiderations” and “reopening” claims with “new and material” evidence.
- **Higher Level Review** – More experienced VA employee reviews the same evidence. Similar to the former “DRO Review”.
- **Board Appeal** – Appeal directly to BVA.

If a veteran chooses to appeal directly to the BVA, there are also additional options to choose from in that lane. A veteran will need to pick one of three lanes at BVA depending if they want:

- A direct decision, no additional evidence.
- Submit additional evidence (within 90 days).
- Request a hearing before a BVA Law Judge (videoconference).

The Appeals Modernization appears to streamline the current (Legacy) appeal process. Projected time frames seem much shorter than the Legacy process. Effective date rules are veteran-friendly. The effective date is preserved as long as the veteran continues to prosecute the claim/appeal.

These new laws will be new to VA employees as well. When this new law takes effect on February 19, 2019, we encourage our Members to refer any questions to their National Service Officer. We want to carefully monitor the implementation of these new laws and regulations.
**BPVA Officers**
Holly Koester, President  
Douglas Beckley, Vice President  
Paul Sonye, Treasurer  
Milton Young, Secretary

**Board of Directors**
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Scott Law, Board Member  
Robert Thomas, Board Member  
Josh Maley, Board Member

**National Director**
Douglas Beckley

**Executive Director**
Sharon Moster

**Government Relations Director**
Douglas Beckley

**Membership Director**
Douglas Beckley

**Sports Director**
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**Volunteer Coordinator**
Josh Maley

**National Service Officers**
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Mike Yaskowiak, Cleveland

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Dale Spiller, VLO-Dayton

**Certified Hospital Liaison Officers**
Milton Young, CHL-Cleveland  
Douglas Beckley, CHL-Columbus  
Curtis Fatyol, CHL-Dayton  
Sylvester Cooper, CHL-Cincinnati

**Mission Statement**
The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter strives to improve the quality of life of honorably discharged veterans who have spinal cord injury, dysfunction or illness including but not limited to multiple sclerosis and ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease) through advocacy, medical research, sports and recreation, education and communication.

**DISCLAIMER**
The Buckeye Banner is a publication of the Buckeye Chapter, 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. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of BPVA, its Officers, Board Members, the Editor or production staff.
Lately I’ve been watching a new TV show called “New Amsterdam.” It’s about a new doctor that has taken over as director of a hospital and gets the staff energized. He asks everyone “What can I do to help you”? People start caring about their jobs and get more involved. So, Buckeye PVA members I’m asking, “What can I do to help you?” We would really like to provide more opportunities to get involved in Buckeye PVA and your community. Currently in Cleveland we have a monthly Hot Dog hand out, All You Can Eat Fund Raiser, Annual Golf outing, Buckeye Wheelchair Games, and VA Arts & Crafts Show. If you are interested, reach out to Dayton, Chillicothe and Cincinnati POC’s and see what programs they have going on! If there is something you are interested in please let us know.

Milton Young and I attend a VAVS meeting once a month. We found out key points we wanted to share.
*The Cleveland VA is one of the last 8 hospitals in Ohio to become smoke free. They are no longer allowing smoking on their property as of February 1st.
*Fisher House Cleveland Grand Opening is May 2019. For those of you that need or would like to know more about respite care there is currently one bed in Long Term Care, one bed on the 6th floor, and at home or nursing home care is available. When possible, please give SCI care 1 month notice so proper arrangements can be made.
*We understand some veterans like one day annuals, and some feel it’s too much in one day.

We are looking for your feedback. Please let Buckeye PVA board member know your concerns.

Many thanks to all of our members that have sold and bought raffle tickets for the All You Can Eat fund raiser. This is our biggest fund raiser of the year. We help fund members to attend the DAV Winter Sports Clinic, Buckeye Wheelchair Games, Emergency Assistance, National Veteran Wheelchair Games and many other activities.

April is PAM - Paralyzed Veterans of America Awareness Month. Throughout the month we are asking members to represent the Buckeye Chapter, and educate the public about PVA’s mission of service to our members, veterans, and the disabled community. If you have the opportunity to talk in your child’s class or group, other veteran groups, church or community groups, and need pamphlets please call the office. We can send you some hand outs and can record your service.

The next Banner will include pictures of the Buckeye Wheelchair Games held April 26, 27, 28. We hope to see you there, participating, volunteering, or cheering on your fellow members. Anyone interested in purchasing the extra Buckeye Wheelchair Team shirts, polo shirts or hats for yourself or family member, please let us know by so we can order extras.
A Note From Sharon Moster

Hello and Happy Spring! I am really looking forward to warmer weather! I cannot wait to plant bulbs in my yard and watch my flowers grow! We have many exciting events coming up over the next few months, including the All You Can Eat Fundraiser, Buckeye Wheelchair Games, and the Billiards Tournament!

I am wishing you all well and looking forward to seeing many of you at these events!

Emergency Assistance Programs

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter has available an Emergency Assistance Program. This program helps members of the Buckeye Chapter who may find themselves in financial distress causing possible eviction from their homes, disconnection of utilities or the inability to pay for food.

Members must be in good standing for a minimum of 90 days prior to qualifying for consideration. Application for help is limited to twice yearly or up to a maximum of $500 per year. This is a confidential process. Payments must be made directly to the vendor. Please contact the Chapter office for more details. (800) 248-2548; (216) 731-1017.

Volunteers Needed

Chapter Volunteer Coordinator Josh Maley needs your help! We are gathering a list of people who would like to help at our events. We provide meals at the Cleveland V.A.M.C. 5 times per year and need about 7 to 10 volunteers.

Buckeye Wheelchair Games could use your help in a number of areas. Typically events require 10-15 people over a three day period. This is a great way for students over the age of 15 to get service hours. Students must be supervised by an adult from their group. One adult per 5 students. Please send us your name, email address, and phone number so that Josh can contact you with more details. Send your information to info@buckeyepva.org or call the Chapter office at 216-731-1017 to sign up.

Greater Cincinnati including Dayton, Donate Today

Greater Cincinnati and Dayton, give G.I.V.E. a try and support veterans through a donation. Through the Paralyzed Veterans of America's G.I.V.E. (Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere) clothing donation program, service never goes out of style.

Your generous donations of clothes, small appliances, and gently used household goods help improve the lives of severely injured veterans and strengthens the fabric of our community. Plus, your donations are tax deductible – a receipt will be issued upon pickup/drop off.

In Ohio, this service is only available in the Greater Cincinnati/Dayton area, but is expanding to different locations. Stay tuned for an area near you!

To donate, call (314) 416-1300 or visit the website for more information: www.pva.org/ways-to-give/give/give-clothing
Dates to remember

Buckeye PVA Events

All You Can Eat - March 16, 2019
Buckeye Wheelchair Games - April 25-27, 2019
Billiards Tournament - June 14-15, 2019
National Veterans Wheelchair Games - July 11-16, 2019
Buckeye PVA Golf Tournament - August 5, 2019
Buckeye Cup - November, 2019

Buckeye PVA Chapter Meetings

Meetings are subject to change. Call the Chapter office to confirm. Monthly meetings are held at the Chapter office. General Membership meetings are held at Cleveland V.A.M.C.; Cincinnati V.A.M.C.; and Dayton V.A.M.C.

March 21, 2019
April 13, 2019 General membership meeting Spring lunch.
June 22, 2019 General Membership Meeting
July 25, 2019
August 15, 2019
September 21, 2019 General membership meeting.
October 17, 2019
November 16, 2019 General Membership Thanksgiving Meal
December 21, 2019 Holiday meeting and dinner
We Proudly Support the
Paralyzed Veterans of America
BUCKEYE CHAPTER

Improving the Lives of Those Who Have Protected Ours

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Burton, OH 44021
440-834-9700

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ANNUAL AIR RIFLE & AIR PISTOL PROGRAM
Cal-Diego Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament
January 28-29, 2019
San Diego, CA
Mid-Atlantic Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament
March 6-7, 2019
Richmond, VA
Wisconsin Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament
March 30-31, 2019
Milwaukee, WI
New England Combined Air Rifle and Bocci Tournament*
April 26-28, 2019
Brockton, MA

Buckeye Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament
April 26-27, 2019
Geneva, OH

*Indicates combined events

PARALYZED VETERANS NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS CIRCUIT
North Central Trapshoot
September 8-9, 2018
Sioux Falls, SD
Mid-Atlantic Shooting Sports Tournament and Handgun Shoot
November 9-11, 2018
Charles City, VA
Arizona Shooting Sports Tournament
February 8-10, 2019
Phoenix, AZ
Cal-Diego Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament
March 29-31, 2019
Redlands, CA
Pistol Shoot - March 29, 2019
Lytle Creek, CA
Wisconsin Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament
May 17-19, 2019
Rifle/Pistol Shoot - May 17, 2019
Green Bay, WI

ANNUAL PVA/NWPA BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT SERIES
Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament Battle at the Beach
September 14-16, 2018
Virginia Beach, VA
Mid-South Billiards Tournament
October 12-13, 2018
Memphis, TN
Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament Chuck Willis Mem
March 22-24, 2019
Midlothian, VA
Mid-America Billiards Tournament
April 5-7, 2019
Oklahoma City, OK
Buckeye Billiards Tournament
June 14-15, 2019
Wickliffe, OH

Mountain States Billiards Tournament
June 21-22, 2019
Fountain, CO

HANDCYCLING RACING
Museum of Aviation Marathon
January 12, 2019
Warner Robins, GA
PVA Racing High Performance Camp
January 26-February 1, 2019
Brooksville, FL
Top End Euro-American HC Championships
February 2-3, 2019
Gainesville, FL
Valley of the Sun
February 16-18, 2019
Phoenix, AZ
One City Marathon
March 2, 2019
Newport News, VA
Off-Road Spring Expo
April 19-21, 2019
Chesterfield, VA
PVA Learn to Race Camp
April 23-26, 2019
Gettysburg, PA
Blue and Gray Half Marathon and Criterium
April 27-28, 2019
Gettysburg, PA

NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES
Great Plains Bowling Tournament
July 12-15, 2018
Council Bluffs, IA
Mountain States Bowling Tournament
August 15-18, 2018
Colorado Springs, CO
Mid-Atlantic Bowling Tournament
September 28-30, 2018
Glen Allen, VA
Nevada Bowling Tournament
November 29-Dec 2, 2018
Las Vegas, NV
Florida Gulf Coast Bowling Tournament
February 21-24, 2019
Tampa, FL
Mid-America Bowling Tournament
April 12-14, 2019
Shawnee, OK
Vaughan Bowling Tournament
June 27-30, 2019
Romeoville, IL

For more information, visit: pva.org/sports
For the past few years, there has been a growing movement across the United States for digital sports; our chapter is not immune to the ever-changing definition of the word “athlete” and we find ourselves witnessing this firsthand. If you are ever at the Louis Stokes VA Medical Center, I encourage you to make your way down to the Long-Term Spinal Cord Unit where you will find our members on a digital training ground, preparing for their return to the online VA Wii Sports Classic which they won last year and finished third the year before. When asked about the third-place finish Earl Hicks, Resident Council President, was very quick to say with a chuckle, “We (The Buckeye Team) should have won. The competition must have beefed up their scores.” Right now, the only available online event is bowling, although other events such as golf, tennis, and table tennis are in the works. There are several residents who are known as masters in their Wii sports such as Doug Pierce, a complete quad who is so good at golf that he instructs the person helping where and how hard to swing; Jesse Evans, who has several perfect games in bowling and an average approaching 280, is described by Hicks as, “An absolute monster.” Hicks also said, “That man needs to be recognized, he is good.” With such a high concentration of talent from the new Rec. Therapist Desmond who is one of the more challenging tennis players to the guru-like prowess of Mr. Pierce and Mr. Evans, we are guaranteed medals in all digital sports for years to come. The new sip and puff Wii remote that was donated by Buckeye PVA is going to bring even more independence to the floor allowing even complete quads like Pierce to be completely in control of their own controller and will make their victories that much sweeter.

Aside from the competitive nature of the Wii room, there are many other activities that take place on the Long-Term Unit like board games and monthly Resident Council meetings. These meetings allow topics such as cutting edge medical technology, current events, and future recreational events to be discussed between residents and staff. Kristen Leili, Assistant Nurse Manager, when asked if there was a noticeable change in morale said, “The guys used certain terms like, ‘building coalition’ and creating friendly rivalries’ in their recent Resident Council Meeting.” She also talked about how great it is as a nurse to watch the residents learn to adapt and help each other overcome different obstacles. In addition to training and competitions, there are other activities ranging from Bingo night to holiday picnics and barbeques outside on their private patio. This patio is equipped with a grill, basketball court, boccia court, and even several gardens where they can grow flowers and their own produce.

In the next couple months, we have several upcoming events, most notably the Buckeye Wheelchair Games which will be taking place during the last weekend in April from the 25th to the 27th at the SPIRE Institute in Geneva, Ohio. Applications are now being accepted and the deadline is March 8th. Other upcoming events include our Monthly Hot Dog Pass Out on the first Saturday of every month, the Billiards Tournament June 14th and 15th, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Louisville, Kentucky July 11th-16th, and the Buckeye PVA Golf Tournament taking place August 5th at Windmill Lakes Golf Club in Ravenna, Ohio. If you are interested in or volunteering at any of these events, please visit our newly updated website to inquire. I thank you for your service, membership, and interest in our chapter and I hope to see you soon.

*Since the writing of this article, Mr. Evans has passed away. Rest In Peace
Mileage Reimbursement

Paralyzed Veterans of America Buckeye Chapter Visitor Mileage Reimbursement Program

Who is eligible to participate in the program? Must be a BPVA Member in good standing for a minimum of 90 days to participate. The Committee has the option to make exceptions for extenuating circumstances.

What is the acceptable time period before the program becomes available for use? The BPVA Member must be hospitalized for a minimum of one week.

What is the acceptable distance for mileage reimbursement? The mileage reimbursement will be given to visitors for travel to a VA hospital in the State of Ohio for the wellbeing of members who are hospitalized. Beginning and ending travel must be in the State of Ohio.

How much is the reimbursement? Reimbursement will be at a rate of .20 per mile. Mileage will be determined via MapQuest based on the submission of the visitor of the beginning and ending address. Chapter will reimburse up to 2 trips per month with a $2,000 cap per year.

Reimbursement request containing the name of the member, name and address of the visitor, the date of visitation and the origin of the trip must be submitted by the 20th of the following month, with payment at the end of month. Request for reimbursement will only be valid for one calendar month following travel.

How will reimbursement be paid? Reimbursements will be via check.

What locations are included in the program? Reimbursement will be for Ohio VA hospitals only.

For more information contact the Chapter Office at 800-248-2548.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America

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MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation’s veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

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

- Minivans, full-size vans and trucks
- The latest in adaptive technology
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MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.

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INDIVIDUAL SPORTS PROGRAM (ISP)

Most of our members know that the opportunity to participate in competitions in specialty sports events is encouraged and subsidized by Buckeye PVA. We have a number of members taking advantage of this program. Here are a few stories:

Holly Koester, Chapter President, is attempting to participate in marathons in all 50 states. The ISP is helping here offset the costs. Here she is with her sister Joy at the starting line in New Orleans this year.

Quad Rugby Player Paul Mann participated in the PVA Code of Honor tournament, and was on the winning team! Here are a few words from Paul:

“It was something enlightening to be a part of! Thank you for helping me to experience it. I hope I made Buckeye PVA look good for the National PVA!” Congrats Paul!

Richard Swauger is on his way to Paralympic competition in fencing, and Terry Rock is currently on the bowling circuit.

What are you interested in pursuing? Let us help!!

Buckeye Wheelchair Games 2019

April 25-27, 2019 in Geneva, Ohio
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<th>Member Birthdays - March, April, May</th>
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Government Relations Report

by Doug Beckley
Government Relations Director

HEADING TO WASHINGTON

March 4th - 7th, 2019 Doug Beckley, Government Relations Director and Sharon Moster, Executive Director will be heading to Capital Hill to meet with members of Congress to advocate for Veterans and people with disabilities. Prior to hitting the Hill they will spend two days familiarizing themselves on the issues to be discussed at the PVA Advocacy and Legislation Seminar.

The following is a brief summary of the issues that will be addressed. (they are in no specific priority order.

AIR CARRIER ACCESS ACT

The Issue:
The Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) prohibits discrimination based on disability in air travel. Despite progress, too many passengers with disabilities regularly encounter significant barriers. Enforcement of ACAA protections is limited to administrative action and civil fines. In October 2018, the President signed legislation to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (Public Law 115-254). This legislation included several provisions from the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act (ACAAA), including increased civil fines for passenger injuries and wheelchair damage, development of an Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights, and establishment of a Department of Transportation (DOT) Advisory Committee on the Air Travel Needs of Passengers with Disabilities. In the 116th Congress, PVA is supporting congressional oversight of these provisions to ensure that DOT carries out the law’s requirements. PVA is also working to ensure the reintroduction of legislation addressing the remaining pieces of the ACAA not already enacted into law. Key provisions that still need to be passed by Congress include strengthening ACAA enforcement through referral of certain complaints to the U.S. Attorney General and a private right of action and requiring airlines to ensure that airplanes meet broad accessibility standards such as those found on other modes of transportation used by the public.

CAREGIVER EXPANSION

The Issue:
The Department of Veterans Affairs’ Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers must have the resources necessary to allow it to meet the expansion timelines provided for in the VA MISSION Act (Public Law 115-182) in order to service veterans injured before September 11, 2001. Congress must also pass legislation to allow primary caregivers to earn income credits for caring for disabled veterans, to safeguard primary caregivers’ own income security. Additionally, Congress must make eligible for the comprehensive caregiver program those veterans with catastrophic illnesses that are a result of their service.

LONG-TERM SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

The Issue:
Congress must enable the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to successfully balance its long-term services and supports (LTSS) systems as well as maintain a safe margin of community living center capacity. In that vein, VA should publicly report its LTSS workload and waiting times. Likewise, Congress must conduct oversight of VA’s initiative to provide home and community-based services (HCBS), as well as request GAO conduct a follow-up report on veterans’ access to and availability of VA HCBS.

PROVISION OF IVF

The Issue:
Congress must make in-vitro fertilization (IVF) a permanent part of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ medical care package. In addition, Congress must allow for further services to address the needs of women veterans whose injuries prevent a full-term pregnancy, as well as the needs of veterans whose injuries destroyed their ability to provide genetic material for IVF.
SPECIALY ADAPTED HOUSING PROGRAM

The Issue:
The Department of Veterans Affairs’ Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant program provides home modifications for catastrophically disabled veterans with service-connected disabilities to help them live barrier-free lives. PVA supports legislation that would allow VA to prioritize a veteran’s SAH claim if he or she has been diagnosed with a terminal illness to include, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Due to the aggressive nature of ALS, it is imperative that veterans are afforded the opportunity for an increased quality of life while they still have the ability to enjoy it. PVA also supports legislation that would increase the current amount of the SAH grant to better match the cost of construction. Finally, PVA supports legislation that would allow a veteran to utilize the grant more than one time. Veterans should not have to limit themselves from moving into a different residence due to not being able to afford making the necessary modifications, or having to shoulder the burden of paying for the modifications themselves.

REHABILITATION AND PROSTHETIC SERVICES
(Automobile Allowance and Adaptive Equipment)

The Issue:
PVA supports improvements to the Automobile Adaptive Equipment (AAE) Program and the Automobile Allowance Grant. Specifically, PVA supports legislation allowing veterans to utilize the Automobile Allowance Grant more than once for the purchase, not lease, of an adapted vehicle. Considering vehicles do not last a person’s lifetime, veterans should have the ability to purchase a vehicle, with the assistance of an AAE grant, once every ten years without having to shoulder the burden of the full cost of a vehicle themselves. In addition, VA must continue to reimburse for adaptive equipment requirements as stated in statute. Veterans should not have to submit an itemized list of this equipment to qualify for the grant. Finally, PVA supports improvements in the AAE program for veterans with non-service-connected disabilities.

READI FOR DISASTERS ACT
(Readying Elders and Americans with Disabilities Inclusively)

The Issue:
The 2017 and 2018 natural disasters around the nation revealed numerous gaps in the ability of the emergency response and recovery system to address the needs of people with disabilities. The READI for Disasters Act would create a network of centers focused on research, training and technical assistance to assist states and localities to better involve and support people with disabilities and older adults during times of disasters. It would also establish a National Commission on Disability Rights and Disasters to study the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and others with access and functional needs. In addition, it calls for a review of the spending of disaster funds to ensure people with disabilities and older adults have access to services and that buildings and structures reconstructed following disasters are accessible. Finally, the measure would require the Department of Justice to examine how the civil rights of people with disabilities and older adults are treated during and following disasters.
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WASHINGTON, DC

Today, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced its proposed access standards required by the “VA MISSION Act.” The law sought to reform VA’s community care programs, including replacing the existing Choice program that sets the benchmark for access to care in the community.

The VA is proposing community care access standards that are based on average drive time and appointment wait times. Paralyzed Veterans of America applauds the VA’s attempt to provide timely, quality health care in the most appropriate setting to veterans. “We look forward to hearing more from the VA about how these standards will impact costs and resources,” said Carl Blake, U.S. Army Veteran and Paralyzed Veterans of America’s Executive Director. “The VA and Congress must ensure the expansion into the community is not at the expense of the quality care currently provided through the VA health care system.”

“The proposed new access standards will significantly increase the number of veterans eligible to access community care by at least 20 to 30 percent, by the VA’s own assumptions. This will substantially increase health care costs for VA,” said Blake. “It is critical that VA manage this escalation in costs while ensuring that adequate resources continue to be provided to the VA health care system, particularly specialized services like spinal cord injury and disease care, upon which millions of veterans already rely.”

Paralyzed Veterans of America is particularly concerned about the drive time access standards that have been proposed. Drive time standards were previously considered during the debate over the original Choice program and were a component of an earlier community care access pilot for rural veterans, Project ARCH. Most concerning to Paralyzed Veterans of America is VA’s reliance on modernized health care IT to successfully execute this new program. Considering the VA’s past and current failures with IT programs, it is a very risky assumption that VA can get this right, particularly with the target implementation date less than six months away.

The bottom line is strong oversight will be necessary to ensure VA implements this correctly. More importantly, Blake emphasized, “It will not be acceptable to veterans like our members, who use VA health care almost exclusively, to cannibalize the existing system in order to fund the expansion of this new community care program.”
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