



North Central Chapter

North Central Chapter

209 N. Garfield Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104
1-605-336-0494 * 1-800-505-4782
Email: info@ncpva.org Website: www.ncpva.org
National PVA Website: www.pva.org



Volume 363

February/March 2023

Upcoming Events

February/March 2023

Feb 9 . . . Membership Meeting,
Chapter Office, Noon Luncheon
and 1:00 PM Meeting

Feb 12 . . . Super Bowl Sunday

Feb 14 . . . Valentine's Day

Feb 16 . . . SF Veterans Council
Meeting, Alliance Building, 7:00
PM

Feb 20 . . . Presidents' Day, Office
Closed

Feb 23 . . . Women Veterans Video
Conference, 3:00 PM

Feb 27/Mar 2 . . . Advocacy Legis-
lative Seminar, Arlington, VA

Mar 9 . . . Membership Meeting,
Chapter Office, Noon Luncheon
and 1:00 PM Meeting

Mar 11 . . . Stand Up for Women
Veterans Retreat, Our Savior's Lu-
theran Church, Sioux Falls, 8:30
AM - 1:30 PM

Mar 12 . . . Daylight Saving Time
begins

Mar 16 . . . SF Veterans Council
Meeting, Alliance Building, 7:00
PM

Mar 17 . . . St. Patrick's Day

Mar 20 . . . First Day of Spring

Mar 30 . . . Women Veterans Video
Conference, 3:00 PM

Notice of PVA North Central Chapter Election

Election Timeline

February 1

Nominations Open. Nominations may be made in person or by any other electronic means. **Submit bio/photo and why you would be a good candidate by March 17th.**

April 28

Nominations Closed.

May 1

Ballots will be mailed out with a self-addressed return envelope. Ballots must be returned in the envelope in a timely manner

June 8

Election results will be reported at the Annual Membership Meeting.

October 1

New term of office begins.

In accordance with Chapter bylaws, election of officers will be held annually, and the officers will serve a one (1) year term. Officers include: President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. At the Annual June Chapter Membership Meeting, the Election Committee will report the election results.

Certification of Membership

If a write-in candidate be elected, he or she shall have thirty (30) days to successfully complete the certification process, if not previously certified. If you have any questions on the election procedure, contact the Chapter Office.

SD State Veterans Cemetery Endowment Fund

With the passing of SB 91, the South Dakota Veterans Council has established an Endowment Fund with the South Dakota Community Foundation. This fund will be used for the maintenance and operations of the veterans cemetery.

The South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery will be located at the 1-90/I-229 area in Sioux Falls, SD and will encompass up to 50 acres of land donated by the City of Sioux Falls.

All federally defined veterans, spouses, and dependent children are eligible for burial in the State Veterans Cemetery.

We are proud to be able to give our veterans their final resting place on the eastside and keep them close to their families.

If you would like to contribute to the Endowment Fund, please click on the following link:

<https://sdcommunityfoundation.org/for-advisors/existing-funds/south-dakota-veterans-cemetery-fund/>



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!

Tuesday, February 14th



Monday, February 20th

Office Closed

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

**North Central Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America**

OFFICERS

President, Chuck Doom
Vice President, Harlan Schmidt
Secretary, Greg Brandner
Treasurer, Gene Murphy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Duane Biesboer
Perry Grimme Rodney Melcher

PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Chapter Hospital Liaison: Chuck Doom
Legislation Director: Terry Paulsen/Gene Murphy
Volunteer Coordinator: Charles Doom
VAVS: Lisa Cummings/Sheri Kloes
Membership Officer: Duane Biesboer
Newsletter Editor: Barbara Priesz
Sports Director: Mike Olson/Charles Doom
P.O.C. Women Veterans Committee: Bonnie Schmidt
P.O.C. MS Committee: Perry Grimme

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Michael Olson

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER

Brad Friez

VA Dakota Regional Office
2501 West 22nd Street, Room 100
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

605-333-6801

800-795-3632

OFFICE STAFF

Lisa Cummings, Executive Director
Terry Paulsen, Government Relations Director
Barbara Priesz, Administrative Assistant
Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8 - 4

Sioux Falls VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Melissa Suter, Social Worker
605-336-3230 ext. 7898

Fargo VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Tracy Lamont, SCI Coordinator
701-239-3765

Black Hills VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Amber Jones, SCI Coordinator
605-347-2511 ext. 17003

— Attention Members —

If you are receiving your newsletter by mail and would like to receive this via email, please contact me at the Chapter Office (LisaC@ncpva.org/605-336-0494) with your email address. This will help save the Chapter on postage and printing costs.



<http://www.facebook.com/ncpva>

Disclaimer: The North Central Chapter PVA newsletter is published six times a year. It serves its members and interested parties by informing them about chapter activities, veterans' issues, SCI related matters, advocacy and legislative developments and other relevant issues concerning disabilities and the disabled community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the North Central Chapter, its Officers, Board Members or the Editor. Similarly, appearance of advertising herein does not constitute an endorsement of their products or services. The editor has the right to edit all articles.

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

Membership-Duane Biesboer

The Chapter currently has a total of 160 members and 84 Associate Members.

Regular membership is FREE! If you know of anyone who has a spinal cord injury or disease, please have the Veteran contact the Chapter office.

Beginning October 1st, all Associate Members will be invoiced for Annual Dues. Annual dues are \$30 per year and Life Dues are \$200.00.

Thank you to those who have sent in their dues!!

Please notify the Chapter when you have
a change of address.

Volunteer Program-Charles Doom

The Chapter had 218 hours for the month of December; YTD - 718. Gene Murphy and Steve Wagner were December 2022/January 2023 Volunteers of the Month. Remember to look for your volunteer number in the newsletter and win a \$25 Gift Card! If you see your number, call the Chapter Office!



“Friends Aiming High”

by John Green

Framed and Matted - \$275

Print Only - \$75

To order your print, please contact the
Chapter Office at (605) 336-0494

Paralyzed Veterans of America Releases Statement on Selection of Mike Bost as New Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C., (Jan. 10, 2023) - Paralyzed Veterans of America Executive Director Carl Blake today released the following statement on today's announcement of **Mike Bost (R-III.)** as Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs for the 118th Congress.

“We look forward to working with Chairman Bost and ensuring the needs of today's catastrophically disabled Veterans are properly and expeditiously addressed. Needs like those addressed in [PVA's 2023 Policy Priorities](#), which include: protecting access to VA's spinal cord injury and disorder (SCI/D) system of care through sufficient staffing and infrastructure; expanding access to VA long-term services and supports (like Home and Community-Based Services and Caregiver Supports); improving VA specialized benefits and health care services for paralyzed Veterans and their survivors, like home modification grants and improved survivors benefits; and much more. Only by working with Chairman Bost and all members of Congress, can we best support our Veterans, their families, and caregivers.”



South Dakota Veterans Council

The SD Veterans Council will hold their meeting
on **Wednesday, April 19, 2023**

Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home,
Hot Springs, 3:00 PM, MT



1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1



Online
My Health, My Care: 24/7 Access to VA

**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT LINE**

1-855-260-3274

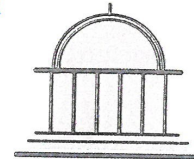
988 - SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

BE VIGILANT OF PACT ACT SCAMS

On August 10, President Biden signed the [Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act \(PACT Act\) into law](#). This law helps millions of Veterans and their survivors by:

- Extending VA health care eligibility for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 (Post-September 11, 2001) eras
- Expanding benefits eligibility for Veterans exposed to toxic substances and their survivors



Tips to Avoid PACT Act Scams

Scammers are taking advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud. There's been an increase in PACT Act-related [phishing \(email\)](#), vishing (phone), and [social media scams](#) targeting Veterans to access their PACT Act benefits or submit claims on their behalf.

Veterans should be cautious of anyone who guarantees a lucrative financial benefit or service.

Do's

- ✓ You may submit your application securely [online](#) via VA.GOV or in person at any Regional Office. You may file your claim directly with VA and then, VA will assist in gathering evidence necessary to support it. There are no costs or hidden fees to apply.
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who advertise VA benefits can only be obtained with their help. These companies may not be recognized by VA and may be attempting to charge illegal fees.
- ✓ Be cautious of aggressive companies who may try to pressure you to sign their contract through frequent communications or by insisting "you must act now or lose your chance for benefits."
- ✓ Be cautious of companies who claim to be contacting you on behalf of VA or to have a special relationship with VA. Contact VA at 1-800-827-1000 if you are unsure about the authenticity of any message received.
- ✓ Validate: If you are interested in working with a Veteran Service Organization (VSO), agent, or attorney, use the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#) to confirm and validate their credentials.

Don'ts

- ✗ Do not sign a contract agreeing to pay an unauthorized company a percentage of your benefit payment in exchange for their assistance with your VA claim. If you need help filing a claim, there are representatives of VSOs, agents, and attorneys who have been [accredited by VA](#) to assist you.
- ✗ Do not sign a blank form for someone else to complete later. Always review the completed form before signing and keep a copy for yourself.
- ✗ Do not be fooled by companies who advertise they have special relationships with medical professionals and can guarantee your benefits award. If they are defrauding the Federal government, you could be held responsible for paying those benefits back.
- ✗ Do not provide your social security number, medical records, or other personally identifiable information to anyone offering claims assistance before confirming their credentials using the Office of General Counsel [Accreditation tool](#).
- ✗ Do not sign forms that are not [VA generated](#) or third-party authorization for someone to provide "behind-the-scenes" claims assistance.

www.VA.gov/PACT is the official source of PACT Act information.

We want Veterans and survivors to apply now for their PACT Act-related benefits. To report suspected scams, please contact the VA Office of Inspector General ([OIG Hotline \(va.gov\)](#)). File a complaint with the [Federal Trade Commission](#). Visit the [Cybercrime Support Network](#) for additional [resources](#) to help Veterans, service members, and their families combat cybercrime.

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Learn more and sign up at VA.gov/PACT
Download the VA Health and Benefits App
Call us at 1-800-MyVA411 (1-800-698-2411)
Find a VA at VA.gov/find-locations/

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

Veterans in Suicidal Crisis can go to any VA or Non-VA Health Care Facility for Free Emergency Health Care

Starting Jan. 17, Veterans in acute suicidal crisis will be able to go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days and outpatient care for up to 90 days. Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit. This expansion of care will help prevent veteran suicide by guaranteeing no cost, world-class care to veterans in times of crisis. It will also increase access to acute suicide care for up to 9 million veterans who are not currently enrolled in the VA.

The VA has submitted an interim final rule to the federal register to establish this authority under section 201 of the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment (COMPACT) Act of 2020. The final policy, which takes effect on Jan. 17, will allow VA to:

- Provide, pay for, or reimburse for treatment of eligible individuals' emergency suicide care, transportation costs, and follow-up care at a VA or non-VA facility for up to 30-days of inpatient care and 90-days of outpatient care.
- Make appropriate referrals for care following the period of emergency suicide care.
- Determine eligibility for other VA services and benefits.
- Refer eligible individuals for appropriate VA programs and benefits following the period of emergency suicide care.

Eligible individuals, regardless of VA enrollment status, are:

- Veterans who were discharged or released from active duty after more than 24-months of active service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former members of the armed forces, including reserve service members, who served more than 100- days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

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- Former members of the armed forces who were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature, a battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment while serving in the armed forces.

Over the past year, VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end Veteran suicide, including establishing 988 (then press 1) as a way for Veterans to quickly connect with caring, qualified crisis support 24/7; proposing a new rule that would reduce or eliminate copayments for Veterans at risk of suicide; conducting an ongoing public outreach effort on firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety; and leveraging a national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign, "Don't Wait. Reach Out."

VA Reaches 1M Veterans in Military Exposure Screenings

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs marks a historic milestone by screening one million veterans for military exposures as part of the PACT Act. The screenings are a key component of the law - which empowers the VA to deliver care and benefits to millions of toxic exposed veterans and their survivors.

Veterans enrolled in VA health care will be offered an initial toxic exposure screening then follow-up screenings at least once every five years.

The screening takes an average of five-to-ten minutes and begins by asking veterans if they believe they experienced any toxic exposures while serving in the Armed Forces. Veterans who answer "yes" are then asked about specific exposures, including open burn pits, Agent Orange, radiation, contaminated water and other exposures. If a veteran has been exposed to toxins during their time of service, the VA wants to know. It not only impacts their individual future care, but it can also improve overall toxic exposure-related care and outcomes.

Veterans who have not been screened for toxic exposure or has never received care at VA, are encouraged to contact the VA about enrolling in the VA health care system and about obtaining a toxic exposure screening. The VA encourages all eligible veterans and survivors to apply for their earned PACT Act-related health care and benefits now. Don't wait until something is wrong before going to the VA — their providers are trained to recognize issues and concerns unique to veterans.

14677

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, SPORTS & REC

Veterans Casting Away Disabilities Event

From Kirt Sickels, VCAD Board Member

We are reaching out in regards to the Veterans Casting Away Disabilities Event. The Board is moving forward with annual event this year and the information given here will get this started for you. Please note again that we will have some restrictions to keep everyone safe and our numbers are limited due to resources and volunteers. We are proposing inviting 45 Veterans and their care takers to this spring event, May 7-12, 2023.

We do think that we will possibly do an additional event this year inviting other additional Veterans and their caretakers in September.

The six-day event will be held at the Honey Creek Lodge and Resort in Moravia, Iowa; right off Lake Rathbun. Lake Rathbun is a beautiful lake with over 11,000 acres that offers fishing from boats, pontoons and off the dock. Other fun activities that will take place throughout the week include: nightly campfires, fishing contests, fish fry, awards night, Iowa DNR classes, tours of the Hatchery and other sponsored and self-directed alternate activities This annual event promotes rehabilitation by assisting physically challenged veterans the chance to experience the sport of fishing and the social means of the event. Fishing assistance will be offers to those who need it.

Participation in this event is open to all veterans with spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputation, visually impaired, PTSD or other life changing disabilities. Veterans please note that applications will be accepted at first come first serve and will have first priority. All disabilities are reviewed by the Board and medical staff to complete event participation.

Staff of VCAD Fishing Event will make all the arrangements at the resort for lodging and meals. Applicants should be aware that the event is held at a resort and veterans and caregivers will be rooming together. VCAD staff will make every effort to provide a safe and comfortable lodging experience for everyone. Once accepted, please do not call the resort to make lodging or room changes, staff of the event will make all the arrangements.

Eligible veterans can apply by completing the application. Please assist the process by answering all the

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questions on the application. If your application is not filled out completely and properly signed, your registration may not be accepted and will be sent back to you for resubmission and could impact you coming to the event. During the event medical support will be available; however, each participant must have a medical provider complete the Physical Exam form. If the Physical Exam form is not filled out completely and properly signed, your registration will not be accepted. There will be no exceptions to this policy. **All participants requiring daily supportive care or assistance in activities of daily living MUST bring their own caregiver or support person.** Nursing care for activities of daily living such as bathing, showering, chronic wound care, and catheter care is NOT provided. We recommend that if you anticipate needing personal equipment or supplies that you plan to bring these items with you or arrange for them through a local pharmacy. **It is also very important that you bring all required medications with you for the entire trip.**

Participants are responsible for a registration fee of \$50.00 to cover their own attendance cost. Participants bringing a spouse or caregiver will need to pay an additional \$50.00 for that person to attend. If your registration is not accepted, your money will be refunded. Checks should be made payable to **Veterans Casting Away Disabilities.**

Important Information:

- Registration is again first come first serve and this event is aware of COVID limitations. The COVID Pandemic may force different safety restrictions within the hotel and we will keep you updated if there any which may affect you. Invites will fill up fast so please don't delay! Registration deadline is April 1st.
- Be sure to enclose your check or money order with your application.
- Don't forget to include your signed copy of the ***Rules and Expectations.***
- Expectation is that applicants participate and remain at the event **ALL WEEK**, otherwise another veteran could have enjoyed the week.
- This event is offered to disabled veterans and one

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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, FUNDRAISING



We're proud to be a Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization. Through the Thrivent programs, we are eligible to receive grant dollars, fee-free donations, and support from Thrivent Action Team service projects.

To learn more about Thrivent's membership benefits and generosity programs visit thrivent.com/generosity

Qualified Charitable Distributions



The Pension Protection Act of 2006 first allowed taxpayers age 70½ or older to make tax-free charitable donations directly from their IRAs. Technically, these taxpayers were allowed to exclude from gross income otherwise taxable distributions from their IRA ("qualified charitable distributions," or QCDs), up to \$100,000, that were paid directly to a qualified charity.

These gifts are also known as "Charitable IRA rollovers." The law was originally scheduled to expire in 2007, but was extended periodically through 2014 by subsequent legislation, and finally made permanent by the Protect Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015.

**Newsletter Booster Program
Thank you for your support!**

Alan & Kathryn Gobczynski
Paul Hanson
Dennis Hahnemann
Jim and Marilyn Arneson

Please support your local Chapter!

Newsletter Booster Program

The North Central Chapter PVA publishes the newsletter 6 times per year. 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 newsletter (unless otherwise specified) for only \$10.00. Please help defray the cost of publishing by supporting **YOUR** Chapter. Thank you!

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Amount of donation \$ _____

**Send all remittance payable to:
PVA North Central Chapter, 209 N. Garfield Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104**

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, ADVOCACY/LEGISLATION-TERRY PAULSEN

2023 PVA LEGISLATIVE POLICY PRIORITIES

For more than 75 years, PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA—the nation’s premier nonprofit of choice for disabled veterans, their families, and caregivers—has led the fight for accessibility and provided a full circle of support from the point of injury or diagnosis to all of life’s milestones. With offices inside every Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) spinal cord injury and disorder (SCI/D) center across the U.S., PVA is unmatched. Staffed with licensed architects, medical professionals, legal experts, and leaders in research and education, PVA fights to help veterans with SCI/D or diseases, like MS and ALS, receive the benefits they earned, the specialized health care they deserve, the accessible homes and vehicles they need, and the meaningful careers they want.

For these veterans to thrive, they must have access to high-quality, comprehensive health care and timely delivery of all earned benefits. They must also have equitable access to the same opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans.

Protect Access to VA’s Specialized Health Care Services

To ensure access to VA’s health care system, it must receive sufficient funding. Without it, VA will be unable to provide veterans proper care, hire and retain health care professionals and support workers, and maintain and expand VA medical infrastructure.

PVA advocates for proper funding for the SCI/D system of care through the Independent Budget - a partnership with DAV, PVA, and VFW. In addition to adequate funding, other reforms are needed to ensure VA can meet veterans’ health care needs.

Staffing: VA must effectively use the pay and workforce provisions approved in Public Law 117-103 (RAISE Act provisions) and the PACT Act (Public Law 117-168) to recruit and retain necessary health care professionals. VA must also increase retention incentives and reform its hiring processes, including working with Congress to make needed reforms. Congress must also take additional action to boost pay caps for other providers not included in the RAISE Act provisions and Pact Act.

Infrastructure: VA’s infrastructure processes need to be reformed and staffing increased to allow the department to effectively use needed funding. VA also must develop a nationwide infrastructure plan to better address the SCI/D system’s unique care delivery model.

Expand Access to VA Long-Term Services and Supports

VA’s services span the spectrum from facility-based care to home and community-based services. Increased availability of this range of resources is crucial to the long-term health of paralyzed veterans, as well as ensuring all veterans are able to receive the care they need throughout their lives in the setting of their choice.

Facility-Based Long-Term Care: VA must adequately assess the number of veterans with SCI/D who need facility-based specialty long-term care and implement reforms needed to prioritize these types of infrastructure projects.

Home and Community-Based Services and Caregiver Supports: VA must increase access to home and community based-services. VA needs to expedite expansion of the Veteran-Directed Care program. This program provides veterans with the ability to direct their own care and hire individuals, including family members, who will help them with their everyday needs. Veterans must also be able to continue receiving VA funds that allow them to pay their caregivers, even when hospitalized. Congress and VA must also prioritize efforts to increase the direct care workforce and allow VA to provide veterans with financial support for assisted living options.

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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, ADVOCACY/LEGISLATION-TERRY PAULSEN

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VA must reform the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC). Restrictive eligibility criteria have kept some paralyzed veterans from being found eligible for this program. For those veterans who are not eligible for the PCAFC, VA should provide them with more information about other programs available to help them, including the general caregiver program. The Administration and Congress must improve supports for caregivers as outlined in the 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers, which was developed by the RAISE Family Caregiving Act and Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act advisory committees and focuses on the needs of all caregivers.

Improve VA Benefits and Health Care Services for Paralyzed Veterans and their Survivors

Veterans and Survivor Benefits: Congress must increase VA Special Monthly Compensation/Aid and Attendance benefits for catastrophically disabled veterans to offset increased costs for home care and other needed supports.

Congress must continue to improve access to services and benefits for veterans who have experienced military sexual trauma.

Congress must pass legislation ending forfeiture of military retirement pay to receive VA disability compensation. Congress must increase the rate of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for surviving dependents and lower the eligibility threshold. Congress must also ensure survivors of ALS veterans have access to enhanced DIC benefits.

Transportation Programs and Supports: Congress must authorize veterans who have nonservice-connected catastrophic disabilities to receive adaptive equipment from VA to drive their vehicles. VA and Congress must also provide improved transportation services and supports that help veterans access needed health care.

Life Insurance Benefits: Congress must reform VAlife to allow premium waivers for catastrophically disabled veterans and ensure ALS veterans' survivors receive these critical benefits.

Home Modification Grants: Congress must raise the rate of funding available through VA's Home Improvements and Structural Alterations grant program to allow eligible veterans to access needed housing modifications due to their disabilities.

Health Care and Benefits for Women Veterans: VA must consider the unique needs of women veterans with SCI/D when delivering and developing services and benefits, including those that are gender specific.

Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Congress must repeal VA's ban on IVF and authorize VA to provide assisted reproductive technology, including IVF, surrogacy, and gamete donation at VA for any veterans enrolled in VA health care.

Protect the Civil Rights of People with Disabilities

Protecting the civil rights of people with disabilities is important to ensuring their ability to access the opportunities and freedoms available to all Americans to allow them to live, work, travel, and fully participate in society.

Improve Access to Air Travel: Congress must make systemic changes in the next FAA Reauthorization to improve air travel for people with disabilities, particularly wheelchair users, by reforming the Air Carrier Access Act to add standards for aircraft accessibility and improve enforcement of the law. Congress must also improve paralyzed veterans' access to programs that facilitate the security screening process.

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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

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Increase Disability Access: Congress must enhance tax incentives to help businesses comply with their obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Also, the Department of Justice must investigate more individual ADA complaints and issue long-overdue regulations related to hotel bed height and accessible medical equipment standards.

Industries creating new models and forms of transportation, including electric and autonomous vehicles, must ensure disability access as a matter of equity.

Improve Access to Social Security Benefits

Congress must end the five-month wait for Social Security disability insurance benefits to ensure people with disabilities have financial support when they most need it. Veterans must receive more information about Social Security benefits and assistance in applying for them. Also, Congress must ensure that caregivers who are not in the workforce because they are providing caregiving assistance are able to receive credit under Social Security.

Increase Employment Prospects for Veterans with Disabilities

Congress must increase access to employment opportunities for veterans with significant disabilities through tax incentives for employers and improvements to supports provided to veterans through the state workforce system. VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment program must ensure veterans with catastrophic disabilities are able to fully access the services that allow them to return to work.

(see additional information on Page 14)

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adult caregiver/family member. No additional family members can be accepted due to space.

- A fishing license will be provided for all veteran participants. Eligible Iowa Veterans will be offered a life time hunting and fishing license.
- Fishing gear will be available for those participants who do not have equipment. All participants are encouraged to bring their own tackle and fishing gear, including wet weather clothing.
- Boats and life jackets will be provided. If you have your own boat or life jacket and want to bring it, we would encourage you to do so. Gas for personal boats would be covered for fishing activities. You will be responsible to get your boat to and from the resort.

I hope that you can be a part of the **Veterans Casting Away Disabilities Fishing Event** this year! Please contact Kirt Sickels at castawaysboard@gmail.com or the Chapter Office if you have questions and/or to request an application.

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SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



Come Celebrate Unity and Self-Sacrifice
As Veterans Observe The

Four Chaplains Memorial Service

To be held at the
American Legion Post 15
1700 West Russell Street
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
Sunday February 5, 2023
at 2:00 PM

PUBLIC IS INVITED!

Sponsored by
American Legion Post 15
and Singing Legionnaires

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**VA Black Hills Care System***By Thomas Johnson/Public Affairs Officer*

Over the past two years, we have seen an increase in services provided and workload. VA Black Hills has increased its workload by over 6% in the last year. The Rapid City CBOC has seen a 23% increase in Veterans over the last 2 years and a 5% increase in Veterans visits over the past year. VA Black Hills is actively seeking to grow its enrollments so that every eligible Veteran knows we are here to provide them the services they have earned.

VA Black Hills is currently reaching out to eligible Veterans who are not using VA care and providing them with services that the VA can offer. We invite eligible Veterans to attend an enrollment event and can enroll them in VA and schedule their first appointment. Four Enrollment Expos were held in November, and we hope to grow the program and expand to rural areas of SD.

The new Rapid City VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is on time and on budget. We are looking forward to caring for Veterans at this new state-of-the-art facility next summer. New features to the CBOC:

- Increasing our Clinic from approximately 14,000 sq ft to over 45,000 sq ft.
- Geo-Thermal- The new clinic is using best practices in green technology to provide energy-efficient solutions to heat and cool the building via geothermal pumps.
- Zero incline entrance- No curb, easy to access for wheelchairs.
- Covered drop-off location- Zero entry loading and unloading zone in front of the building.

Additionally, new services have been added to the CBOC which will allow us to expand to meet the needs of over 7,800 Veterans in this Community where currently we are able to treat 5,000. This is an increase of 36%. New services provided:

- Lab: Increase in staffing and chemistry analyzer. This allows Rapid City to provide rapid lab results where we have, in the past, had to send labs to Fort Meade.
- Audiology is doubling in size. (From one to two audiologists).
- Radiology: X-ray, Mobile CT and MRI. Actively pursuing Mammography.

The Fort Meade Campus started using a new program called GI Genius. This program assists doctors in polyp

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detection during colonoscopies. We are the ONLY facility in South Dakota offering this new technology to patients. Private facilities in the state do not have it yet. VA purchased 115 units nationwide and our site was chosen to use it. GI Genius is a great tool in providing the best possible exams to our Veterans. GI Genius provides artificial intelligence-assisted colonoscopies. Performing AI-assisted colonoscopies takes no additional time. 90% of patients with colon cancer will beat it if it's caught early. Screening assisted with artificial intelligence is another way for patients to stack the odds in their favor of catching precancerous polyps before the disease advances and spreads to the lymph nodes.

VA Black Hills is hiring! Last month, VA hosted hiring events at every VA Healthcare System to streamline the hiring process and quickly onboard new employees. This hiring event was used to recruit and onboard new Providers, Nurses, Housekeepers, Nutrition and Food Service workers, Social Workers, and Medical Support Assistance (MSAs). These are all critical need positions within VA. By decreasing the amount of time, it takes to onboard prospective employees, we can rapidly hire these critical need positions and get them to work. We are happy to report 131 new employees were hired at VA Black Hills during this hiring event.

VA Caregiver Support

With VA's Caregiver Support Line, assistance is just a quick phone call away. Whether you are in need of immediate assistance or have questions about what services you may be eligible for, the caring licensed professionals who answer the support line can:

- Tell you about the assistance available from VA.
- Help you access services.
- Connect you with the Caregiver Support Coordinator at a VA Medical Center near you.
- Just listen, if that is what you need right now.

Caregiver Support Line:

1-855-260-3274

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**From the Office of Brad Friez**
National Service Officer

This month I want to cover several issues and updates.

First, the VA Clinic at Wagner, SD has a new phone number and it is (605) 384-2341.

Second, there have been some issues regarding notification of Veteran Service Organizations when clients have upcoming Board of Veterans Appeals Hearings with a Judge. As it stands at the present time the BVA is sending notifications to PVA's new National Office location. So, if you are a PVA client and you have been notified of an upcoming Hearing we would greatly appreciate that information. I happened to be doing research in a Veteran's VA electronic file and ran across the BVA's letter stating that this Veteran's BVA Hearing was for last Friday. I found out roughly a week and a half before said hearing. I was told by a reliable source that 52 % of clients do not show up for their scheduled BVA Hearings. So, it is extremely important that we communicate about those Hearings with each other.

Third, we have a new Service Center Manager at the VA Regional Office in Sioux Falls. Her name is Tracee Metcalf and she comes to us by way of the Waco, TX VA Regional Office. I do not have any updates regarding a new Medical Director at the Sioux Falls, SD VA Medical Center nor the physician who will fill the post as the SCI (Spinal Cord Injury) Provider.

We found out during January's Stakeholder Call that the Sioux Falls VA has had two beds reserved in the CLC Ward since October for respite care. Also, the medical records backlog with ROI (Release of Information) is still a work in progress as they continue to be down in staff for that department. One of our members mentioned some concerns he had with a Sioux Falls motel that contracts with the VA. We elevated those concerns during the Stakeholder call and VA is confronting the management of that motel to resolve their issues.

Lastly, thanks to all for their patience with us as both I and Kristi battle various health issues.

STAND UP FOR WOMEN VETERANS RE-TREAT

Let's Connect - Buddy Check

Purpose: To strengthen the leadership, power, and voices of military women through peer support and connection resources. **FREE** for all women who have served. Childcare and Brunch included.

When: **Saturday, March 11, 2023**

Time: **8:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Place: **Our Savior's Lutheran Church**
909 West 33rd Street, Sioux Falls, SD

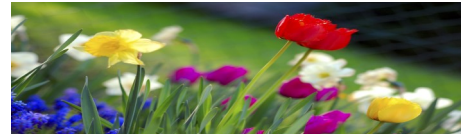
Guests and Vendors, please register at
SDVETS.ORG



Daylight Saving Time begins **Sunday, March 12th.**

Set clocks ahead one hour Saturday night before bedtime.

HAPPY
SPRING
3-20-2023

**CFC Campaign**

If you are a federal government employee or your employer offers a charitable giving campaign through United Way, you can help us to continue our programs and services we offer to our members, veterans and other individual with disabilities.

CONTRIBUTION CODE: 54682



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

North Central Chapter



PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

VA Required to Contact Transitioning Veterans

President Joe Biden on October 17, 2022, signed VFW-support legislation into law that requires VA to contact and offer services to newly separated veterans. The *Solid Start Act of 2022 (P.I. 117-205)* aims to help veterans make a successful transition out of the military and into civilian life. The *Solid Start Act* requires VA, along with the Department of Defense, to:

- Collect contact information during transition classes or separation counseling for troops who are separating from service.
- Explain the existence and purpose of the new program.
- Call veterans three times within their first year of separation.
- Publish information about the program in print and on VA’s website.
- Provide women veterans with information tailored to their health care needs and benefits.
- Provide information on access to veterans’ own state and local resources.
- Assess the effectiveness of the program.
- Ensure calls are tailored to each veteran’s needs.
- Prioritize outreach to veterans who have accessed mental health resources prior to separation from the military.

The *Solid Start Act* also requires VA to follow up on missed calls. The law also offers the program to all newly separated veterans regardless of the type or characterization of service. 15136

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY

PAGE 10

TANTO

KRIS PARONTO

AWARD WINNING AUTHOR AND SPEAKER

FRIDAY MARCH 3 2023

**DOORS OPEN AT 5PM
EVENT STARTS AT 7PM**

HELD AT: THE ALLIANCE,
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- 13 Hours
- The Patriots Creed
- The Ranger Way

* Limited quantities available

KRIS "TANTO" PARONTO

Inspiring Hero of the 2012 Benghazi Attack & Subject of the Book and Major Motion Picture, 13 Hours Kris Paronto—"Tanto" as he is affectionately known in security contracting circles—is a former Army Ranger from 2nd Battalion 75th Ranger Regiment and private security contractor who has deployed throughout South America, Central America, the Middle East and North Africa. He also worked with the U.S. Government's Global Response Staff conducting low profile security in high threat environments throughout the world.

Paronto was part of the CIA annex security team that responded to the terrorist attack on the U.S. Special Mission in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012, helping to save over 20 lives while fighting off terrorists for over 13 hours. Paronto's story is told in the book 13 Hours, written by Mitchell Zuckoff and his five surviving annex security team members, and in the 2016 major motion picture of the same name.

Crucible of Crisis: Resilience in the Face of Adversity

Sharing lessons learned from the attacks in Benghazi and other deployments in some of the most hostile environments around the world, retired US Army Ranger Kris Paronto provides insight on how to persevere, lead, stay focused, and make strategic decisions in the midst of chaos and severe trials. From the combat field to business environment, Kris shares why effective collaboration, preparation, accountability and training of the mind and body puts us in a better position to turn adversity into opportunity and establish a "Never Quit!" mentality.

Scan the code to purchase your ticket today!

TICKETS:

GENERAL SEATING: \$25 | RANGER PACK: \$50

(RANGER PACK INCLUDES FLOOR SEAT, CHOICE OF ONE BOOK PLUS MEET & GREET WITH KRIS)

LIMITED MEET & GREET SEATS AVAILABLE!

Event is hosted by VFW Post 628 8 Auxiliary. Proceeds benefit local Veterans Support Programs.



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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

2023 South Dakota Legislation Session

The 98th Session of the South Dakota Legislature convened at approximately 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, with Governor Noem’s State of the State Address. This year’s session is scheduled for 38 legislative days, with the main run concluding March 9.

There are 105 legislators—35 in the Senate and 70 in the House of Representatives.

Members of the Senate Military and Veterans Affairs Committee include: Chairman David Johnson (Rapid City), Vice Chairman Larry Zikmund (Sioux Falls) Brent Hoffman (Sioux Falls), Jim Stalzer (Sioux Falls), and Jack Kolbeck (Sioux Falls).

Members of the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee include: Chairman Tim Reisch (Howard), Vice Chairman Ken Teunissen (Sioux Falls), Stephanie Sauder (Bryant), Byron Callies (Watertown), Becky Drury (Rapid City), Fred Deutsch (Florence), Randy Gross (Elkton), Scott Moore (Ipswich), William Shorma (Dakota Dunes), James Wangsness (Miller), Julie Auch (Yankton), Aaron Aylward (Harrisburg), and Peri Pourier (Rapid City).

Bills

Week of
January 16-20, 2023



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

SB 12	Authorize the construction of a National Guard vehicle maintenance shop in Watertown, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.
SB 13	Authorize the construction of an addition to the BG Dean Mann Readiness Center in Sioux Falls, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.
SB 14	Revise the legal description for the construction of a National Guard Readiness Center in Sioux Falls, make an additional appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.
SB 15	Accept Uniformed Services ID as proof of veteran status to have veteran designation added to a state license or ID card.
SC 801	Honoring the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Singing Legionnaires of American Legion Post 15 in Sioux Falls.
HB 1024	Make an appropriation for the construction of a maintenance shop for the Wildland Fire Suppression Division in Hot Springs and to declare an emergency.
HB 1037	Amend the eligibility for admission to the state veterans' home and repeal the residency requirement.
HB 1038	Revise certain provisions pertaining to the Department of Veterans Affairs and residency in the State Veterans Home.
HB 1039	Revise certain provisions regarding the payment of tuition for members of the South Dakota National Guard.
HB 1045	Increase the basic salary schedule for county veterans' service officers.
HB 1046	Provide free tuition at Board of Technical Education institutions for children or spouses of members of the South Dakota National Guard disabled or deceased in the line of duty.
HB 1047	Revise certain provisions regarding military affairs.
HB 1048	Repeal and make technical changes to provisions regarding the Board of Military Affairs.
HB 1049	Revise the General Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2023.

Continued on next page.

Click Below for Legislative Calendar:
<https://mylrc.sdlegislature.gov/api/documents/236418.pdf>
Click Below for link to legislative bills:
<https://sdlegislature.gov/Session/Bills/68>

Bills

Week of
January 16-20, 2023



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

HB 1051	Require counties to hire veteran service officers in proportion to the number of veterans residing in the county.
HB 1052	Change the eligibility requirements of a property tax relief program for disabled veterans and surviving spouses.
HB 1054	Provide a stipend for the erection of a private headstone for a deceased veteran.
HB 1065	Increase the maximum amount of dollars payable by the state to erect the headstone of a deceased veteran.
HC 8001	Honoring E. Royce Williams for his life, achievement, and heroism as he is awarded the Navy Cross.
HCR 6003	Encourage the Executive Board of the Legislature to authorize the interim legislative study of long-term care services for veterans regardless of disability ratings and to develop long-term care plans for VA-operated purchased and subsidized long-term care services.

Click Below for Legislative Calendar:
<https://mylrc.sdlegislature.gov/api/documents/236418.pdf>
Click Below for link to legislative bills:
<https://sdlegislature.gov/Session/Bills/68>

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**PVA North Central Chapter****Birthday Roster - February/March 2023**

Eugene Ridenour, Jr.	Feb 02
Terry Bacon	Feb 06
Carl Berg	Feb 06
Dennis Meinen	Feb 06
Harlan Schmidt	Feb 07
Judy Hauck	Feb 08
Julie Squires	Feb 08
Douglas McCuddin	Feb 09
Andrew Watson	Feb 09
Chad Maxon	Feb 11
Cathy Brandner	Feb 12
Johnathan Englund	Feb 13
Mark Johnson	Feb 13
Ralph Martin	Feb 13
Allan Trautman	Feb 14
Vernon Johnson	Feb 22
Mark Wolf	Feb 22
Ernest Milliron	Feb 24
Saundra Tryner	Feb 25
Randall Thornburg	Feb 28
Caron Morris	Feb 29
Gary Reineke	Feb 29
Glenn Broski	Mar 09
Linda LeBorgne	Mar 09
Ronald Remer	Mar 12
Tom Shields	Mar 12
Kurt Lysne	Mar 14
John North	Mar 15

(continued in next column)

(continued from first column)

Vern Anderson	Mar 16
Steve Barrett	Mar 17
Timothy Ruppert	Mar 19
Willard Miers	Mar 20
Donald Sjostrom	Mar 20
Anthony Steensgaard	Mar 21
Dennis Adams	Mar 22
Brad Friez	Mar 25
Lance Anderson	Mar 26
Warren Zweifel	Mar 26
Terrence Kohler	Mar 27
Fred Nielsen	Mar 28
William Northrup	Mar 29

988 Suicide Crisis Line

On July 16, 2022, 988 became the national three-digit phone number for all mental health, substance use, and suicide crises. 988 will be routed to South Dakota's only National Suicide Prevention Lifeline center, **The Helpline Center**, transitioning from the current Lifeline number, 1-800-273-8255. 988 will offer rapid access to behavioral health support through connection with trained crisis specialists.

How will 988 differ from 211? 211 is a non-emergency number for finding community resources, such as food banks and shelters. 911 is currently used for all emergencies, including mental health emergencies. 988 will be a mental health crisis number, and calls will be handled by National Suicide Prevention Lifeline counselors.

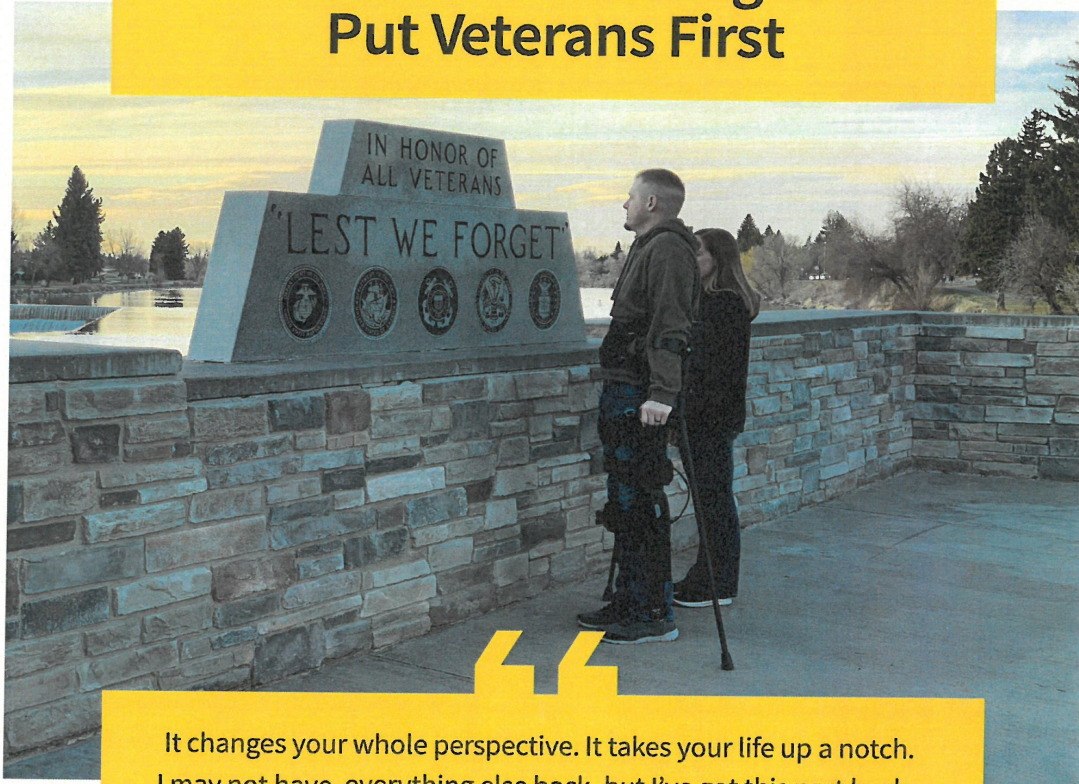
When should you call 988? Anyone in need of crisis support for themselves or someone else should call 988 which started on July 16th. 988 is an opportunity to transform our country's behavioral health crisis system to respond to anyone in need.

Is 1-800-273-8255 going away? No. Moving to 988 does not mean the 800 number goes away. Dialing either number will get people to the same services, no matter which number they use. In the end, 988 is an easier-to-remember way for all Americans to access a strengthened and expanded network of crisis call centers.

For more information about 988, click on: <https://sdsuicideprevention.org/988-2/>.

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER



Are you a Veteran in crisis?
We're here for you.




**Veterans
Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

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Car Sunshades for Sale

Proceeds will benefit the Chapter's programs and services!

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How to Donate Property

Please donate that Auto, Boat, Yacht, Truck or RV that's no longer needed to NCPVA! Receive the maximum legal tax deductions and possibly a partial cash payment.

For more information about car, boat, RV and other property donations or to receive a "no obligation" evaluation of your potential vehicle or other property donation, please call toll free: (866) 2-GIVING or (866) 244-8464.

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VOLUNTEER NAME SOMEWHERE
IN THIS NEWSLETTER AND CON-
TACT THE CHAPTER OFFICE IF
YOUR NAME OR NUMBER IS
LISTED.

CHUCK DOOM
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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National Service Office: (605) 333-6896 NSO Email: www.dav.vbasux@va.gov
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Paralyzed Veterans of America
North Central Chapter
209 N. Garfield Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

VA Health Care Systems Contact Information

Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

2501 West 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Phone: (605) 336-3230 or (800) 316-8387
Fax: (605) 333-6878

VA Black Hills Health Care System - Fort Meade Campus

113 Comanche Road
Fort Meade, SD 57741
Phone: (605) 347-2511 or (800) 743-1070
Fax: (605) 720-7171

VA Black Hills Health Care System

500 North 5th Street
Hot Springs, SD 57747
Phone: 605-745-2000
Fax: 605-745-2091

Minneapolis VA Health Care System

One Veterans Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55417
Phone: (612) 725-2000 or 866-414-5058
Fax: (612) 725-2049

Fargo VA Health Care System

2101 Elm Street
Fargo, ND 58102
Phone: (701)232-3241
Fax: (701)239-3705

VA Montana Health Care System

1892 Williams Street
Fort Harrison, MT 59636
Phone: (406) 442-6410
Fax: (406) 447-7916

Cheyenne VA Health Care System

2360 E. Pershing Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Phone: (307)778-7550
Fax: (307) 778-7336

Sheridan VA Health Care System

1898 Fort Road
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone: (307) 672-3473 or (866) 822-6714
Fax: (307) 672-1900

The PVA North Central Chapter proudly serves the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Southwest Minnesota, and portions of Montana and Wyoming.