



---

501(C)(3) Veterans Non-Profit

## **2026 Chill-N-Chat Sessions, including Speakers:**

### March

#### ***Multiple Sclerosis Awareness***

PVA is known for our focus on serving Veterans with Multiple Sclerosis (MS). 1 in 4 of our members lives with MS. We help them navigate the ins and outs of living with the disease. We are skilled in securing unique MS benefits for our Veterans from the VA and are adept at navigating the VA to get our members quality care for their condition. We connect members with MS to resources outside of PVA. We have strong partnerships with prominent MS organizations such as the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the VA's Multiple Sclerosis Centers of Excellence.

Presenters: **Juliet Pierce**, Associate Director of Medical Services, PVA

Date: March 11, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

### April

#### ***PVA Awareness Month***

A precursor to Paralyzed Veterans Recognition Day, which was declared by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, PVA Awareness Month started as a day-long observance. After requests from its members and Chapters across the country, the celebration was extended to a full month to raise awareness of not only America's Veterans living with spinal cord injury and disease (SCI/D) and all veterans with disabilities, but also the people, programs, and services that exist to help make their lives easier. Today, many years after its first observance, PVA proudly celebrates PVA Awareness Month to help show how far we have come in the fight to help paralyzed Veterans and all people with disabilities, and to shine a spotlight on how much further we have left to go in helping these heroes regain what they fought for: their freedom and independence.

Panel: **National Service Officers** (NSOs)

Date: April 8, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

May

### **ALS Awareness**

May is ALS Awareness Month. It is a call to action as the ALS community advocates on Capitol Hill for increased funding of ALS research toward treatments and a cure. It is also a time to recognize Paralyzed Veterans of America's commitment to secure benefits and treatments for Veterans with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

ALS is a neurological disease that causes degeneration of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord leading to muscle weakness, atrophy, and loss of function. ALS ultimately robs a person of the ability to walk, talk, eat, and breathe. Considering the damage ALS can do, it is essential to spread awareness so Veterans can be treated as early as possible. Though there currently is no cure, early detection and expert clinical care can provide optimal quality of life through a total body and wholistic management of symptoms.

Early symptoms of ALS may include:

- difficulty swallowing
- cramping
- stiffness of affected muscles
- muscle weakness affecting an arm or a leg
- slurred speech

As the disease progresses, most people lose their ability to walk or use their arms and hands. They also lose the ability to talk and swallow food. ALS varies considerably among Veterans regarding onset and rate of progression. The Institute of Medicine reported that U.S. military Veterans appear to have an increased risk of developing ALS. Experts recommend additional research to further assess the relationship between ALS and military service, and to determine what factors of military service may cause the disease.

Presenters: **Juliet Pierce**, Associate Director of Medical Services, PVA

Date: May 13, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## June

### ***Women Veterans Day***

Celebrated each year on June 12 in recognition of the anniversary of the signing of the 1948 Women's Armed Services Integration Act, this groundbreaking legislation for America's military women granted women a permanent place and an opportunity for a career in the nation's military. On this special day designated to honor America's military women, past and present, come celebrate with us!

Women Veterans Recognition Day, June 12, is synonymous with the Military Women's Memorial – the place to be to honor and celebrate America's military women on this historic day. Join us for a festive afternoon of music, recognition, celebration, fun, food, and appreciation for some 3 million women patriots who have served and are serving this nation so proudly and well.

Presenters: **Lisa Elijah**, Grassroots Advocacy Manager, PVA

Date: June 17, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## July

### ***PVA Sports and the Wheelchair Games***

PVA hosts and promotes a wide range of sports and recreation programs for Veterans with disabilities to enhance their independence, health, and quality of life. Veterans are often first exposed to these adaptive sports through their local VA Medical Center or a PVA Chapter. These programs aim to improve the health and quality of life for Veterans with disabilities.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games are co-presented by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). The games are open to all U.S. military Veterans who use a wheelchair for athletic competition due to spinal cord injuries, certain neurological conditions, amputations, or other mobility impairments. The wheelchair games are the largest annual adaptive sports and rehabilitation event specifically for U.S. military Veterans with disabilities. The games feature a variety of adaptive sports, such as wheelchair basketball, swimming, cycling, and more.

Presenters: **Jennifer Purser**, Senior Associate Director, Sports and Recreation, PVA

Date: July 8, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## August

### ***PVA Healthcare Summit***

For more than 12 years, Paralyzed Veterans of America has expanded its commitment to spinal cord injury/disease (SCI/D), MS, and ALS patient care through its Summit. Summit is an intensive, three-day learning and sharing experience that provides the most updated and vital information, state of the art research, and emerging science, which can be put to immediate use in caring for individuals with spinal cord injury/disease (SCI/D), MS, and ALS. Attendees representing multiple disciplines from the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as private health-care institutions come together to network, collaborate, and share knowledge. With its collaborative, holistic team approach to improving patient care, Summit is one “must attend” conference each year. In 2025, Summit presented 70 plenary and breakout sessions, 20 poster presentations, and made 22.5 continuing education credits available.

Our Summit has enhanced paralyzed Veterans’ commitment to promoting and advocating for quality SCI/D care. Summit offers a platform not only for collaboration among the professionals who provide SCI/D as well as MS, and ALS care, but also for advancing science. Forward focused on ways to support new therapies, treatments, and potential cures for paralysis, as well as advancements in care and education for professionals

caring for individuals with SCI/D, Summit has provided more than 2,800 scholarships for clinicians and funded 600 presenters to participate in state of the science continuing education.

Presenters: **Lindsay Perlman**, MPH, Director, Research & Education, PVA

Date: August 12, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## September

### ***Accessible Home Design book***

How can my kitchen be made more accessible? Can kitchen appliances be more user-friendly? Could I retrofit my bathroom to include a spacious roll-in shower? Where should plumbing fixtures be located, and what type? Whether it's a new accessible residence or retrofitting your existing home, learn ways to improve the accessibility of your kitchen and bathrooms. Information will be presented from several chapters of PVA's book, Accessible Home Design: Architectural Solutions for the Wheelchair User, with real examples and case studies.

Presenters: **Rachel Y. Krishnan**, AIA – NCARB, Project Manager – Architecture, PVA

Date: September 9, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## October

### ***Chill-n-Chat***

Let's spend today relaxing, laughing and conversing with each other about anything and everything!

Date: October 14, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## November

### ***Have a Beautiful Day Event***

More than 60 Veterans with disabilities and their families are welcomed to four cities for day of pampering and relaxation. L'Oréal's "Have A Beautiful Day" event was established to honor, celebrate, and empower military families through beauty education and services and raise awareness of the needs of disabled veterans and the entire disability community.

Presenters: Kelly Thompson, Senior Vice President, Public Relations, L'Oréal

Date: November 11, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

## December

### ***Holiday Party***

Let's celebrate 2026 with a party! Happy Holidays!

Date: December 9, 2026

Registration link: <https://pva.zoom.us/meeting/register/GgHiWfDVSem1ZiKwInqo9w>

