

VA Portland Health Care System
Press Release
Release #0306-1
March 6, 2018

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
VA Portland Health Care System

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Largest Annual Wheelchair Sports Event for Veterans Coming to Portland

PORTLAND, Oregon - Today, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Paralyzed Veterans of America announced the 2020 National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held in Portland, Oregon from July 3 – 8, 2020.

“The Portland VA Health Care System is honored to join PVA hosting the 40th National Veteran Wheelchair Games. The Games will promote a healthy lifestyle with competitive spirit for wheelchair athletes during their visit to the Rose City,” said Darwin Goodspeed, Director, [VA Portland Health Care System](#), organization co-host of the 2020 Games.

The Wheelchair Games, presented by VA and PVA, are open to all U.S. military Veterans who use wheelchairs for sports competition due to spinal cord injuries, neurological conditions, amputations or other mobility impairments. The 2020 games mark the 40th anniversary of the event.

“The Games is an excellent opportunity for Veterans and their families from around the United States to experience everything Portland and the Pacific Northwest has to offer, from food and entertainment to outdoors activities. For Portland, The Games is an opportunity to welcome and support America’s Veteran wheelchair athletes as they put their training to the test in competition,” said Goodspeed.

Competitive events will take place in and around Portland, and will feature 20 medaling events including wheelchair events like basketball, rugby, and slalom along with handcycling and swimming. In all events, athletes compete against others with similar athletic ability, competitive experience or age.

“The Wheelchair Games use the power of sport to inspire recovery, demonstrate the UnstoppABLE character of Veterans, and generate a wider understanding and respect for these Heroes and all people with disabilities,” said David Zurfluh, national president of

Paralyzed Veterans of America. “These Games prove to America and the world that an injury does not prevent a person from contributing to their community, a lesson everyone should witness.”

In addition to the competitions and the opening and closing ceremonies, the Wheelchair Games will include a "Kids Day" where local children with disabilities will have the opportunity to interact with athletes, participate in sporting events, and watch Veterans compete.

More than 2,000 volunteers are expected to donate their time and efforts to the event. For more information about the Wheelchair Games visit www.wheelchairgames.org. To volunteer or to support the Games in Portland email the Portland Chair of the 40th National Veteran Wheelchair Games Shaun Benson at Shaun.Benson@va.gov

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About VA Portland Health Care System

The [VA Portland Health Care System](#) (VAPORHCS) is a two-division, Joint Commission accredited 1A facility that administers a full range of primary, emergency, specialty, tertiary, and long-term care to Veterans throughout Oregon and Southwestern Washington. The VA Portland Health Care System serves more than 95,000 Veterans in Oregon and Southwest Washington. The VAPORHCS catchment area covers more than 30,000 square miles and 26 counties. In addition to two main divisions located in Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington, VAPORHCS operates nine clinics located in Bend, Fairview, Hillsboro, Lincoln City, Newport, Salem, The Dalles, Warrenton, and West Linn. In addition to these clinics, VAPORHCS also operates a Community Resource & Referral Center (CRRC) which serves homeless Veterans in downtown Portland. VAPORHCS has a \$729M annual budget with over 4,000 employees and volunteers. The Portland campus includes 167 Medical/Surgical, locked Mental Health, and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds. The Vancouver campus includes a 76-bed Community Living Center (CLC), a 35-bed Residential Rehab Treatment Program, and a transitional Temporary Lodging Unit. Approximately 743 medical residents, 310 medical students, 240 nursing students and 230 students from other healthcare fields rotate through VAPORHCS annually.

About Paralyzed Veterans of America

[Paralyzed Veterans of America](#) is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. For more than 70 years, the organization has ensured that veterans receive the benefits earned through service to our nation; monitored their care in VA spinal cord injury units; and funded research and education in the search for a cure and improved care for individuals with paralysis.

As a life-long partner and advocate for veterans and all people with disabilities, Paralyzed Veterans of America also develops training and career services, works to ensure accessibility in public buildings and spaces, and provides health and rehabilitation opportunities through sports and recreation. With more than 70 offices and 33 chapters, Paralyzed Veterans of America serves veterans, their families and their caregivers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Learn more at pva.org.

About the Department of Veterans Affairs

The **Department of Veterans Affairs** operates the nation's largest integrated health care system, with more than 1700 hospitals, clinics, community living centers, domiciliarys, readjustment counseling centers and other facilities. VA is the recognized world leader in rehabilitative and recreational therapies for disabled Veterans. VA promotes the rehabilitation of body, mind and spirit by offering adaptive sports clinics and competitions around the nation, including the annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

VA began the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 1981 as a celebration of sports during the International Year of the Disabled Persons. Partnering with PVA in 1985, the NVWG has continued to grow and VA therapists across the country use adaptive sports and the NVWG to enable Veterans to be active in their lives and communities and for some, to reach higher levels of national and international competitions. Through VA's [Office of National Veterans Sports Programs and Special Events](#), the Department manages six national programs delivering direct patient care to Veterans under the authority of 38 United States Code 322.

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