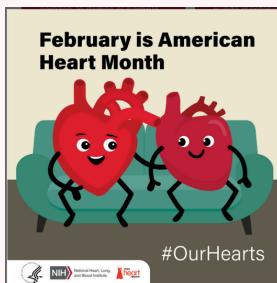


# Momentum 3.0



## Prioritizing Your Heart: February is American Heart Month

February 2026 marks another American Heart Month, a vital time for our community to focus on cardiovascular wellness. For individuals living with a spinal cord injury (SCI), heart health isn't just a general concern—it is a critical priority. Because SCI can disrupt the autonomic nervous system and limit physical activity, the risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke is significantly higher than in the general population.

### Understanding the SCI Connection

Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of morbidity in the SCI community. Beyond reduced mobility, many individuals experience autonomic dysfunction, which can lead to:

- Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD): Dangerous, sudden spikes in blood pressure (injuries at T6 or above).
- Orthostatic Hypotension: Drops in blood pressure when sitting or standing.
- Metabolic Changes: Increased risks for obesity and diabetes due to altered muscle composition and lower metabolic rates.

### Take Action: The "Dose" Matters

Research updated for 2026 emphasizes that consistent, targeted movement is the best defense. Standard guidelines suggest:

- For Fitness: Aim for at least 20 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous aerobic exercise and strength training for functioning muscles twice a week.
- For Heart Protection: To specifically lower cardiometabolic risk, experts suggest 30 minutes of aerobic activity three times per week.
- Adaptive Options: Explore arm cycling, functional electrical stimulation (FES), or seated boxing to keep your heart rate up.

## Celebrate "Wear Red Day"

Join us on Friday, February 6, 2026, for National Wear Red Day. Wearing red helps raise awareness that heart disease affects everyone—including those with disabilities—and serves as a reminder to "Know Your Numbers" (blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar).

### 3 Simple Steps for This Month

- 1. Monitor Regularly:** Track your resting blood pressure and heart rate to identify your unique "normal."
- 2. Fuel Your Heart:** Focus on a diet low in saturated fats and high in fiber to manage weight and cholesterol.
- 3. Consult Your Team:** Talk to your doctor about SCI-specific screenings. Regular check-ups are essential for early detection.

Your heart works hard for you every day. This February, let's commit to working just as hard for it.

#### **A Soldier's Heart**

A soldier's heart, so brave and true,  
Bears scars of battles no one knew.  
In quiet strength, they walk the line,  
For freedom's cause, through dark and shine.  
Though time may pass, their spirit stays,  
A guiding light through all our days.  
On this day, we remember them,  
Our hearts with pride, we honor them.

#### **When Hope Fades**

*The poem describes the feeling of a weary soul, overwhelmed by difficulty and feeling lost in darkness. The speaker searches for a "spark" or "glimmer" in this challenging state, questioning the ability to continue. Despite the urge to give up, an inner voice encourages holding on, identifying a "tiny light" or "fire" that provides guidance. The speaker resolves to hold onto this small spark through difficult times, recognizing it as a source of inner strength. The poem concludes with a focus on taking things one step at a time, holding onto the spark against the darkness.*



# Women's Corner



## Care at VA Long Beach Health Care

Our women's health services offer comprehensive care, including:

- Primary care, including basic female preventive care such as PAP smears, access to basic birth control, STI screenings.
- Gynecology for specialty services and surgeries
- Access to maternity care and reproductive care for eligible veterans: Call our Maternity Care Coordinator for more information
- Female focused ultrasounds and mammograms
- Mental health care and counseling including female providers and female-specific settings

### Contact information:

Laurie Rudisill  
Women Veterans Program Manager  
VA Long Beach health care  
Phone: [562-826-5617](tel:562-826-5617) Phone  
Email: [Laurie.Rudisill@va.gov](mailto:Laurie.Rudisill@va.gov)

DeAnna Dunbar RN  
Breast Care Coordinator  
VA Long Beach health care  
Phone: [562-826-8000](tel:562-826-8000), ext. 16992

Cristiana Fuentes RN  
Maternity Care Coordinator  
VA Long Beach health care  
Phone: [562-826-8000](tel:562-826-8000), ext. 14988

**Evangeline San Miguel RN**  
Women's Health / Cervical Cancer Screening Coordinator  
VA Long Beach health care  
Phone: [562-826-8000](tel:562-826-8000), ext. 13383



# Meet PVA National Service Officer



Hello everyone,

My name is Ryan A. Williams, and I am the National Service Officer with Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) at the Long Beach VA Medical Center. Our office is located in the SCI Building, Rooms T-132 and T-133, and we are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

I am a proud U.S. Marine Corps veteran and served with the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing as an F/A-18 engine and related systems technician. During my service, I completed two deployments to the Persian Gulf — the first aboard the USS Carl Vinson in 2005 and the second aboard the USS John C. Stennis in 2007.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions, need assistance, or would simply like to connect. I am here to support you.

You can contact me anytime at [ryanw@pva.org](mailto:ryanw@pva.org).

Thank you,

Ryan A. Williams  
National Service Officer  
Paralyzed Veterans of America

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"FEBRUARY MAY BE THE SHORTEST MONTH, BUT IT'S FULL OF MOMENTS TO CELEBRATE — FROM SMALL VICTORIES TO BIG DREAMS. HERE'S A COLLECTION OF IDEAS, RESOURCES, AND EVENTS TO BRIGHTEN YOUR DAYS."



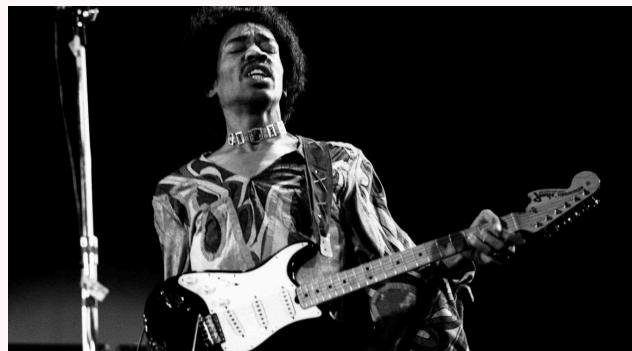
## Message from our PVA- California Chapter President



February is a short month, but it's packed with a lot of events...Groundhog Day, where we learn our fate of a longer winter or not... Valentine's Day, a chance to find love or rekindle the flame of your spouse or mate... President's Day, where the country honors our nation's leaders past and present... and my focus for this article is Black History Month, where we celebrate and learn about Great Americans who came from African origins. In the past, I researched Americans like Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcom X, and Fredrick Douglas. This February I am going to focus on Singers/Musicians, Sir Mix-A-Lot, Jimmy Hendrix, Ella Fitzgerald and Nat King Cole. I am going to do biographical research and try to find something I never knew about these individuals through Google, Bing, and YouTube.

This month is an opportunity for you the California Chapter members to learn about African Americans who made great contributions to our country through politics, sport, acting, science, military etc. This month I would like to ask all of you to learn something about at least one Great African American this February, you may learn a cool factoid, story or something you never knew about that individual and share it with others.

*Martin Luther King Jr, Malcolm X, and Frederick Douglass*



## ATTENTION CALIFORNIA CHAPTER MEMBERS

### Updates for all Members effective February 1, 2026



#### BROWN STICKERS

Brown Stickers will be given out via appointment, and you must be in person to receive the sticker. We will no longer be accepting requests via email. You must have an appointment.

Schedule an appointment at [info@pvacc.org](mailto:info@pvacc.org).

The following information is needed:

1. Current Driver's License.
2. Current Registration.
3. Current Car Insurance

**Note: You don't have a license; your caregiver's driver's license is required.\***

#### Joe Fox Reimbursement Program

At this time, the Joe Fox Reimbursement Program is temporarily on hold due to financial limitations within the California Chapter.

We hope to continue the program in the next fiscal year, July 2026 through June 2027. Some changes will be made to the program to ensure that funding requests are submitted and approved prior to member activities. This will help us better manage the budget and ensure program funds are available and distributed fairly.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support

#### Events for this Month for California Chapter

**SUPER BOWL WATCH PARTY**

**Seattle Seahawks vs New England Patriots**

**Location: SCI/D Building 150 2nd Floor, U-200**

**Date: February 08, 2026**

**Kickoff Time: 3:00 PM**

**Join Us for the Big Game!**

Come cheer, relax, and enjoy the Super Bowl with fellow Veterans and friends.  
Great game • Great company • Great atmosphere

**Hosted at the SCI/D Building!**  
**All are welcome!**

**PVA**  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
California Chapter

**Food will be served!**



PVACC'S MEMBERS  
HYBRID MONTHLY MEETINGS  
WEDNESDAY 02/11/2026 @  
12:00 - 1:30 PM

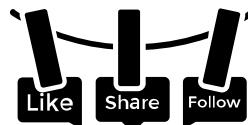


LOG IN INFO FOR ZOOM

MEETING ID: 609 221 6677  
PASSCODE: PVACC  
MOBILE: 1-669-900-6833#

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED  
IN PERSON - RM-U 200 BLDG. 150

CONTACT PLATFORMS



- [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PVACCLB](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PVACCLB)
- [WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/PVACCLB](http://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/PVACCLB)
- [WWW.TIKTOK.COM/@PVACCLB](http://WWW.TIKTOK.COM/@PVACCLB)
- [WWW.TWITTER.COM/PVACCLB](http://WWW.TWITTER.COM/PVACCLB)
- PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA  
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER  
[WWW.PVACC.ORG](http://WWW.PVACC.ORG)
- [WWW.PVACC.ORG](http://WWW.PVACC.ORG)

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



We're calling on compassionate community members to join us in making a difference for our veterans at the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Center in Long Beach. Your time and support can bring comfort, companionship, and encouragement to those who have served our nation. Whether it's lending a hand with daily activities, sharing stories, or simply being present, your involvement helps create a stronger, more caring community. Come be part of something meaningful—because our veterans deserve the very best. If you're interested, email [info@pvacc.org](mailto:info@pvacc.org) and put in the subject line: Volunteer

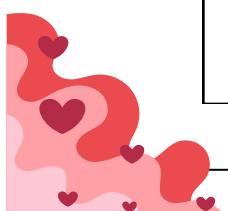
MEMBERS NEWS



Dear Members,

To stay connected and receive updates from PVA-California, please ensure your contact information is current. Email [info@pvacc.org](mailto:info@pvacc.org) or call 562-826-5713 to update your records. Keeping your information up to date helps us provide you with timely news, programs, and benefits.

Thank you,  
PVA -California Chapter





5901 E. 7<sup>TH</sup> ST. BLD 15 R 204  
LONG BEACH, CA 90822

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### QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:



Do you have a question, concern, or need assistance with anything? Our team is here to help! Please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We want to make sure you stay informed, supported, and connected with all the latest news and updates.

### "WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK! 🎙"



WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DONE DIFFERENTLY WITHIN OUR CHAPTER? ARE THERE PROGRAMS, EVENTS, OR RESOURCES YOU'D LIKE MORE OF? YOUR SUGGESTIONS HELP US GROW AND BETTER SERVE OUR MEMBERS—LET US KNOW!

