



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

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Chartered by the Congress of the United States

January 13, 2015

Honorable Julia Brownley
1019 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Brownley:

On behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), I offer you our strong support for the "Veterans Medical Access Act." Those veterans with catastrophic disabilities have the greatest need for health care services and this legislation will ensure that travel does not remain a barrier to that care. This bill is a high priority for PVA's members.

The expansion of travel reimbursement benefits to non-service connected catastrophically disabled veterans will have long term benefits for these veterans. While VA will continue to face tighter budgets in the future, the short term costs of expanding this benefit far outweigh the potentially greater long term health care costs for these veterans. Too often, catastrophically disabled veterans choose not to travel to VA medical centers for appointments and procedures due to significant costs associated with their travel. They then may end up at an outpatient clinic or a private health care facility that is ill-equipped to meet their specialized health care needs. The result is often the development of far worse health conditions and a higher cost of care.

Your effort to expand VA's beneficiary travel benefit to this population of severely disabled veterans will lead to an increasing number of catastrophically disabled veterans receiving quality, timely, comprehensive care, and result in long-term cost savings for the VA. Eliminating the burden of transportation costs as a barrier to receiving health care will improve veterans' overall health and well being, as well as decrease, if not prevent, future costs associated with exacerbated health conditions due to postponed care.

Again, thank you for introducing this critical legislation and we look forward to seeing this effort through to final passage. If we can be of further assistance, please contact me at (202) 416-7708 or by email at carlb@pva.org.

Respectfully,

Carl Blake
Associate Executive Director
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Paralyzed Veterans of America