



# Out Front

## Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President

I want to first start off by letting you know the Chapter COVID-19 Member Grant Program has distributed \$10,000 in relief funds to our members! I'm especially please to see members taking this Program to heart by only applying if truly in financial need. This has ensured our ability to maximize and distribute the available funds to those members most in need of assistance. If you do find yourself food insecure, challenged with PPE expenses, or other basic living expenses because of the COVID-19 pandemic, please contact the Chapter. We are here to help you however we can. Detailed grant application information is on the Chapter website's homepage at [www.newenglandpva.org](http://www.newenglandpva.org).

We continue our Crisis Standards of Care (CSC) advocacy efforts throughout New England. This past month the focus has been on Connecticut and my resident state of New Hampshire. Although these two States appear in law and voice to be heavily against any type of discriminatory acts within the healthcare environment, they haven't reflected this any of their CSC policies or haven't made their CSC policies publicly available for review. I want you to know though, we are making a difference. Through our Government Relations Director Kristen McCone Gordon's advocacy efforts we have been able to affect positive change in the CSC guidelines for the state of Massachusetts and their governing policy committee. To learn more about these advocacy efforts, and others, please see Kristen's report on page 6. Also, if you have a legislative issue or story to share, please feel free to reach out to Kristen anytime. Her email address is [kristen@newenglandpva.org](mailto:kristen@newenglandpva.org) or at 800-660-1181.

The Chapter Board of Directors, Staff and I continue to hold our monthly Board meetings via Tele and video conference. At our August meeting we had to make the difficult decision whether or not we could safely hold our Annual Membership banquet. After reviewing the State's mandated COVID-19 phased guidelines, it was unfortunately determined this would not be possible. The motion to cancel the banquet for 2020 and endeavor to set a date in 2021 was officially made and passed by the Board of Directors. With this decision though, each member will be receiving a unique gift, so please keep an eye on your mail in the coming weeks for this gift from the Board of Directors, Staff and I.

Moving on with COVID-19 restrictions. I recently participated in a Veterans Service Organization update teleconference hosted by Director Vincent Ng on behalf of the Boston VA Healthcare system. He stated that there is only a very small percentage of COVID+ Veterans entering the Boston Healthcare system to be cared for. He also stated some elective procedures and appointments were starting to be allowed and scheduled, but that telehealth visits would still be leveraged whenever possible and appropriate, both for the convenience and safety of Veterans and staff. Director Ng also covered the adjustments being made to the VAMC COVID protocols that now allow a limited number of visitors to see patient while hospitalized or residents. For details on any of the Boston VA Center's access and policies please visit their [website](#).

As a reminder, check in on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page frequently for the latest sports activities, events and Chapter news.

I want to wrap up a little differently this month, in honor of our Executive Director's military service. There were a number of military events celebrated in July, but I want recognize one you may not have been aware of. July 29th marked the 245th birthday of the U.S. Army's smallest branch who's motto is Pro Deo Et Patria = For God and Country. This is the motto of the Army's Chaplain Corps established by the Continental Congress in 1775.

Starting in Word War II, Chaplains were tasked with ministering in combat, and under fire, completely unarmed. Although the Geneva Convention gave Chaplains protected status as noncombatants, of the 33 chaplains interned by the Japanese in the Philippines, 18 died and many that survived were beaten for attempting to invoke the Geneva Convention in efforts to minister to their soldiers. In total during World War II, 124 chaplains were killed in action. In fact, Army Chaplains have served in more than 270 major wars and combat engagements. There have been nearly 400 Army Chaplains who have laid down their lives in battle, and six have been awarded the Medal of Honor.

Over the years of their service though, our Armed Forces have learned to value Chaplains for providing inspiration and hope in desperate times, for being the lone voice of compassion in a hostile environment, for being a safe and approachable source of help, and for providing a perspective on life that can only emanate from a Chaplain's personal relationship with the Almighty. Historically, these are the things for which Chaplains have been valued. However, in the end here, the most powerful thing the men and women in uniform have come to value Chaplains as, is as servants of God and friends to Soldiers.

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and Paralyzed Veteran