



## **Out Front**

**Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President**

---

Great news, with the change in COVID restrictions, our Chapter office is now open! Before stopping by though, please call ahead to obtain a copy of our COVID Office Policies, as there are still precautions we must take to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers and those visiting the office. We took the opportunity during the closure to have the office deep cleaned, sanitized, and repainted. With COVID somewhat in our rear view mirror, we're hoping to start getting back to some day-to-day normalcy.

This past month I had the privilege of being invited to speak at the iBOT PMD donation to the VA Boston Healthcare System's Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center in West Roxbury. This next generation of iBOT is simply a game changer in providing independence and access. Talking about independence, Dean Kamen said in designing the iBOT - "I've got to restore not just mobility. I've got to restore ... independence, dignity, access." Mobius Mobility will be traveling the country donating 2 iBOTs to each VA SCI/D Center for a total of 50. To see a few pictures and read the full story provided by the Manchester VA please turn to [page 7](#).

This past month PVA's Medical Services conducted their annual site visits at West Roxbury and Brockton VAs. Even though these were conducted entirely via Zoom, there were invaluable take aways from every aspect of the SCI/D in-patient, out-patient and long term care services. VA's staff was very accommodating with their schedules to meet with us and provide their perspectives. One thing we learned of, where we could have an immediate impact was in providing financial assistance for VA SCI/D staff's continued education through the Chapter's "[John Brako Nursing Scholarship](#)" fund. This year alone, we've been able to assist 7 individuals with college tuition, course expenses and re-certifications! To learn more and to apply please visit the "[John Brako Nursing Scholarship](#)" page on the Chapter website. Speaking of the Chapter website, in bringing to Director Ng's attention the VA's computer access block of our website, he was able to have the VA IT department remove the block. VA SCI/D staff are now free to access all the website's [SCI/D resources and information](#) and our [extensive online publications library](#).

We held our first Annual New England PVA Charity Golf Classic on Cape Cod. We had a total of 64 golfers and several generous corporate such as Quincy, MA's Retail Business Services who also provided employee volunteers for the registration table. All things considered, especially COVID's delaying our starting plan, things went extremely well. Many Thanks to Chapter Board member Brad Carlson for his part and initiative to make the Tournament happen. We look to build on what we learned this year for an even bigger and more successful Tournament next year!

A couple things in closing this month, the Chapter is seeking a dedicated individual to fill the role of its National Director to PVA. There is a substantial time commitment and nationwide travel is required to serve in this role, but is an invaluable opportunity to learn, participate and contribute to PVA's mission on a national level. If interested, please see the complete details of the role on [page 23](#) or get in touch with me directly either via [michael@newenglandpva.org](mailto:michael@newenglandpva.org) or 857-229-8825.

Lastly, we are saying goodbye to our Executive Director Mark Murphy who is furthering his career in a more focused fundraising role. I'd like to express my sincere appreciation to Mark for all the hard work he contributed. During an unforeseen global pandemic he was able to secure over \$55,000 in grants, supported the office and our members remotely, and finish off the year with the successful planning and execution of our Golf Tournament. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with him in every aspect as part of the NEPVA team. He provided us with a strong work ethic and positivity when working on complex projects, short notice and sometimes challenging office dynamics. Mark's collaborative attitude and leadership contributed to many successful campaigns and efforts that brought in strong results for the Chapter.

I wish Mark good luck with his future endeavors. I have no doubts he will use the same impressive determination and talent to benefit his new employer. I Thank him for all he's done for our Chapter, our members and especially me. Knowing he was available to handle whatever I might need to task him with, made my job that much easier to accomplish on a daily basis.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael G. Negrete". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael G. Negrete  
*PVA National Vice President and  
New England Chapter President*