

PVA MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION

To be eligible for membership the veteran must have a clinically-diagnosed impairment of the spinal cord with accompanying residuals.

The listing which follows is illustrative of injury and diseases of the spinal cord and cauda equina (compression of nerves in the lumbar spine and a narrowing of the spinal canal) but is not all inclusive. In the event an individual applies for membership with a diagnosis, not specifically included in the list, the question should be referred to the PVA Executive Director for appropriate consideration and decision.

ORGANIC SPINAL CORD AND CAUDA EQUINA LESIONS THROUGH:

- 1. INJURY - TRAUMA** to the spinal cord with neurological deficits (loss of motor/sensory function in extremities and/or bowel/bladder dysfunction). Paralysis due to Traumatic Brain injury (TBI) without spinal cord involvement is not a qualifying condition for membership.
- 2. DISEASES - DYSFUNCTIONS** with pathology that affect the spinal cord and produce neurological deficits (loss of motor and sensory function in extremities and/or bowel/bladder dysfunction). Examples include but are not limited to:

Viral infections, inflammations, degenerative conditions, tumors, cysts, congenital and constrictive conditions that affect the spinal cord

(NOTE: Does not include conditions that only affect the brain or are diagnosed but cause no neurological motor/sensory loss in the extremities or bowel/bladder function).

A VETERAN WITH PATHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS RELATED TO THE CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM BUT DO NOT SPECIFICALLY INVOLVE THE SPINAL CORD OR CAUDA EQUINA IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP

Examples include but are not limited to:

Cerebrovascular Accident (stroke), osteoarthritis, toxic or peripheral neuropathy, amputations, and organic/traumatic brain injury.

CERTIFICATION OF MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Procedures for Certifying Eligibility for Membership in the Paralyzed Veterans of America for Candidates seeking National Office and National Directors.

1. Background:

- A. Public Law 92-93 incorporating the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Sec. 7. (Membership Eligibility) sets forth that "Any American citizen shall be eligible for membership in the corporation who was regularly enlisted, inducted or commissioned, and who was accepted for, or was on active duty in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States, or our allies. Service with the Armed Forces must have been terminated by discharge or separation from service under conditions other than dishonorable. Provided, however, that persons otherwise eligible for membership who are on active duty or who must continue to serve after the cessation of hostilities are also eligible for membership. And provided further, that membership shall be limited to such persons as have suffered spinal cord injuries or diseases whether service connected or non-service connected in origin."
- B. On January 19, 1989, the legal opinion was rendered with regard to service in the Reserve Components of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- C. PVA's Board of Directors at their February 1989 meeting passed Resolution F-89-B-4 which mandates the establishment of procedures for and the Certification of Membership Eligibility of the National Directors, Executive Committee Members and any candidate for initial election to National Office.

2. Procedures:

- A. Persons serving as National Directors and Executive Committee Members as of the enactment date of Resolution F-89-B-4 - February 1989.
 - (1) All candidates for membership in Chapter Board of Directors and Officers of chapters must meet the requirements for certification of membership as outlined in Resolution F-89-B-4 and that once elected the individual must be certified by PVA's National Secretary through the Chapter Secretary's office prior to assuming his/her position.

- (a) Proof of American Citizenship (or citizenship of an American territory)
- (b) Proof of active duty service in the Armed Forces of the United States or our Allies which was terminated by discharge or separation under conditions other than dishonorable.
- (c) Proof of spinal cord injury or disease

Note: The most likely documentation of proof is detailed on the "Membership/Certification Application" form (contained in the *Chapter Administrative Manual*). However, there may be other documentation available which will evidence the issue equally well. Any questions on the validity of documentation should be referred to PVA's General Counsel or AED Medical Services.

- (2) All candidates for membership in Chapter Board of Directors, and Officers of Chapters must meet the requirements for certification of membership outlined in (1) above. Once elected the individual must be certified by PVA's National Secretary through the Chapter Secretary's office prior to assuming his/her position.
- (3) PVA National Secretary shall review the documentation for all persons other than himself/herself and, if it is in order, shall sign the "Membership/Certification Application" form. The National Secretary shall then return PDF copy of the completed "Membership/Certification Application" form to the requesting Chapter. The forms for all persons certified by the National Secretary shall be retained in the PVA National Portal.
- (4) PVA National President shall review the documentation for National Secretary and, if it is in order, shall sign the "Membership/Certification Application" form. The National President shall then return a PDF copy of the completed "Membership/Certification Application" form to the National Secretary. The signed "Membership/Certification Application" form shall be retained in the PVA National Portal.

B. Candidates for National Office and National Directors who have not fulfilled this Certification Requirement:

- (1) Those persons listed above shall provide documentation as outlined in paragraph 2A to their Chapter Secretaries. The Chapter Secretary shall review the

documentation provided and, if it is in order, shall send a PDF copy containing the request for Membership/Certification and all supporting documents to the PVA National Secretary no later than 30 days prior to assuming the position.

- (2) The National Secretary shall review this documentation and, if in order, shall sign the "Membership/Certification Application" form. The National Secretary shall then send a PDF copy, to the requesting Chapter, containing the completed request for Membership/Certification for the files of the Chapter Secretary and distribution to the requesting person indicating that the person has been certified. The signed "Membership/Certification Application" form shall be retained in the PVA National Portal.
- (3) Should the National Secretary or the Chapter Secretary disagree on the certification of a member, the National Secretary should consult with the PVA General Counsel and / or PVA's AED Medical Services to obtain an opinion as to whether the person should or should not be certified or if additional documentation is required. If the ultimate decision is that the individual cannot be certified, the National Secretary shall notify the PVA National President who shall notify in writing the appropriate Chapter President and Chapter Secretary of this determination.

C. Certification Requirements for National Officers:

- (1) In order to accommodate nominations for PVA National Office from the floor, individuals nominated for the PVA National Executive Committee from the floor must have their certification requirements submitted to and approved by the PVA National Secretary no later than the day prior to the beginning of the election process.
- (2) When a person submitted for certification has failed to meet the requirements, the National Secretary will inform the Senior Vice President, Membership/Volunteer Program at the national office, the Chapter Secretary and the individual that he or she is not eligible for or entitled to PVA membership.
- (3) When the National Secretary informs Membership/Volunteer Program at the national office that a person submitted for certification has failed to meet the requirements and that he or she is not eligible for or entitled to PVA membership:
 - a) Membership/Volunteer Program notifies the chapter
- (4) The National Secretary of PVA shall be responsible for taking the following steps:
 - a) *Notify the PVA President and the offending chapter's president of the suspected violation and request that the violation be corrected or proper evidence of membership/ certification be presented.*

- b) If certification is not confirmed within 30 days of notice specified in paragraph "a" the Secretary of PVA will report this fact to the Executive Committee which may take such action as it deems appropriate.

3. Appeal Process

Anyone desiring to appeal an unfavorable decision shall use the Executive Committee Appeal process outlined in the *PVA Administrative Guide*.

4. "Membership/Certification Application" Forms

Membership/Certification Forms are contained in Section III Membership of the *Chapter Administrative Manual* and on the PVA Membership and Volunteer Database