The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that Veterans can register for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games online Jan. 7 through April 15. Presented by VA and Paralyzed Veterans of America, the world’s largest sports event for Veterans who use wheelchairs will be held July 11-16 at Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville, Kentucky. “I encourage every Veteran interested in competing at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games to register for this important event,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “The games exemplify VA’s commitment to supporting Veterans as they navigate through recovery and rehabilitation to active, independent lives.” Athletes will compete in 19 events against others with similar age, experience and ability.

More information is available at http://wheelchairgames.org. Follow VA Adaptive Sports on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @Sports4Vets.

There’s a difference between the VA Health Care ID Card, or VHIC, and the Veterans ID Card, or VIC, which is for all Veterans. VA medical centers can only issue the VHIC to Veterans who are enrolled in VA health care. Those interested in the VIC, which can be used in place of the DD-214 for discounts offered to Veterans by many restaurants, hotels, stores, and other businesses, must apply online at: https://www.va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-cards/vic.
Suicide Prevention Discussion Panel

The Providence VA Medical Center hosted its Veteran Suicide Prevention Discussion Panel Jan. 24, which was attended by Veterans, congressional staff, state government officials, veteran service organization and other nonprofit representatives, VA clinicians and other VA staff.

Panel members Dr. Nathan Stein, VA psychologist, Dr. Jennifer Barredo, VA research health scientist, Jeanne Smith, Providence VAMC suicide prevention coordinator, and Jeffrey Hill, Rhode Island Department of Health Violence and Injury Prevention Program manager, discussed ways VA can work with the community to help prevent Veteran suicide.

An average of 20 Veterans die by suicide each day, but 14 of those have not received recent VA care.

“We want to enroll as many at-risk Veterans as possible, but we also want to equip communities to help Veterans get the right care, wherever they need it,” said Dr. Susan MacKenzie, director of the Providence VAMC. “While VA care has proven to be effective, Veterans spend most of their time out in the community.”

The Providence VAMC recently increased suicide prevention staff, and the team’s participation in community events. Organizations interested in inviting them to participate in an event should call 401-273-7100, extension 2154.

The Mental Health Service at the Providence VAMC provides mental health care for Veterans at the Providence facility and at clinics in Middletown, R.I., and New Bedford and Hyannis, Mass. The Providence VAMC Emergency Department is open 24/7 for Veterans with urgent mental health care needs outside of regular business hours. Veterans in crisis and their loved ones can always call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line.