



**Department of
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News Release

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DAV, VA Kick Off Disabled Veterans Winter Clinic *More than 400 with Disabilities Expected in Colorado*

WASHINGTON – More than 400 injured Veterans have signed up to take part in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colo., the largest adaptive event of its kind in the world, scheduled from March 28 through April 2.

“This VA Winter Clinic is an extension of the superb rehabilitative care Veterans receive daily at VA medical centers across the country,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “Through sports and other forms of recreation therapy, we can greatly improve the quality of life for many of our nation’s heroes.”

On March 11, Shinseki led the U.S. delegation to the opening ceremony of the Paralympics in Vancouver, Canada. Since 2005, VA has had a partnership with the U.S. Paralympics that establishes VA’s Winter Sports Clinic as a pipeline to provide participants to American paralympic teams engaged in national and international competition.

The Winter Sports Clinic, which is sponsored by VA and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), teaches Veterans with disabilities about adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing. It also introduces them to a number of other adaptive recreational activities and sports. This year's event will feature Veterans from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now in its 24th year, the clinic is an annual rehabilitation program open to U.S. military Veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities, who receive care at a VA medical facility or military treatment center.

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Winter Clinic 2/2/2

To meet the unique needs of participants, an estimated 200 certified ski instructors for the disabled and several current and former members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team will serve as instructors.

"The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is the highlight of the year for many of our nation's most profoundly disabled Veterans," said DAV National Commander Roberto Barrera. "There is no event that comes close, either in terms of participation or the availability of rehabilitative events for the Veterans who make the journey. We're proud to again co-sponsor this event with our partners at VA and look forward to another year of *Miracles on a Mountainside*."

At the six-day event, Veterans also learn rock climbing, scuba diving, snowmobiling, curling and sled hockey. Other highlights include a self-defense workshop taught by the U.S. Secret Service and the attendance of Olympic Alpine skier Bode Miller.

VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitative and recreational therapies, and operates more than 1,400 sites of care, including 153 medical centers. DAV is a non-profit, congressionally chartered Veterans service organization with a membership of more than one million wartime disabled Veterans.

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Log on to the event's Web site at: www.wintersportsclinic.va.gov