The Paralympic Equestrian Sport Initiative for Veterans is a national initiative designed to support the growth and participation of eligible veterans with disabilities in para-equestrian sports (specifically para-dressage and para-driving). This initiative is coordinated by Carlisle Academy Integrative Equine Therapy & Sports, and is funded by a Federal Adaptive Sports Grant under the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, in partnership with the United States Equestrian Federation and the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship. Participating USEF/USPEA International Para-Dressage Centers of Excellence (COE) and other approved centers will offer clinics, outreach, and ongoing education to emerging athletes and coaches to develop the sport pipeline.

**PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT GOALS INCLUDE:**

- Utilizing gold-medal coaching experts to provide para-dressage and para-driving clinics and symposia at COEs and other select national locations as training, sport classification, and awareness-building opportunities.
- Providing a National Para-Equestrian Coach Development Program to enhance coaching support of eligible veterans.
- Creating a strong foundation of Para-Equestrian education through online workshops/webinars.
- Encouraging para-eligible veterans to participate with the VA’s Monthly Assistance Allowance Program to fund training and competition.
- Coordinating with veteran-oriented competitions and games to promote inclusion of Para-Equestrian sports.

For more information, contact Sarah Armentrout, Carlisle Academy Head of School & National Coordinator of the Paralympic Equestrian Sport Initiative for Veterans at sarmentrout@carlisleacademymaine.com or (207)985-0374.

What is Para-Equestrian Sport?

Para refers to parallel to able-bodied sports, designed for the independent rider/driver with permanent, physical and visual disabilities seeking a competitive track. Athletes may pursue a national or international sport classification which allows them to compete at recognized national and international horse shows in Para-Equestrian dressage or Para-Equestrian driving. Both sports are governed by USEF (national) and FEI (International) and are conducted in a similar fashion to their conventional counterpart (dressage and combined driving), but with riders divided into different competition sport classes/grades based on their functional abilities. Para-Equestrian dressage is the only equestrian discipline recognized at the Paralympics.

For more information on Para-Equestrian Sports or to access the application for the VA Allowance, visit www.usef.org or contact Laureen Johnson, USEF Para-Equestrian Discipline Director at lkjohnson@usef.org or (859)225-7693.