

Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program – Fact Sheet

Experience Counts

Each year, Shepherd Center treats hundreds of people who have sustained a spinal cord injury. From the time of acute admission through outpatient follow-up, our Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Rehabilitation Program provides a full continuum of care to those who have sustained any level of spinal cord injury – paraplegia, tetraplegia/quadraplegia (including those who are ventilator-dependent) or dual diagnosis (spinal cord and brain injury). Our expertise has led to the development of specialized treatment programs dedicated to adolescent patients (ages 12-17), adults, seniors (ages 50 and older), dual diagnosis, intensive care unit patients and those with neuromuscular disorders. In fact, Shepherd Center receives enough patients to maintain 11 full-time treatment teams devoted to spinal cord injury alone. Additionally, three new teams have been added on the Comprehensive Rehabilitation Unit (CRU) serving patients with SCI, brain injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis (MS) and other neurological conditions. Shepherd Center is one of 14 rehabilitation hospitals in the nation designated by the federal government as a “Model System” for care of people with SCI. Hospitals that receive this designation have demonstrated exemplary care and serve as a model for other service providers.

Acute Care and Acute Rehabilitation

Shepherd admits patients with complex medical needs, including patients who are ventilator-dependent, those with multiple trauma or a dual diagnosis of brain and spinal cord injury, and patients with disorders of consciousness (DoC). Shepherd Center’s DoC program is approximately a six-week program with about 1-1/2 hours of therapy daily. The program takes into account reduced consciousness while exposing the patient to therapeutic intervention. Reducing medical acuity, preventing medical complications, and continually measuring arousal and attention to the environment are key components of this program. It includes neuropharmacological management, nutritional management, maximization of seating and mobility, facilitation or communication strategies, and family education and training.



Shepherd Center

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Acute Rehabilitation

- Ten-bed intensive care unit
- Medical/surgical services for secondary complications
- Full team of rehabilitation and medical professionals
- Consulting specialists in all areas are available, depending on the patient’s needs
- Arterial, cardiac, respiratory and hemodynamic monitoring; skin, bowel and bladder care; nutritional assessment; and preventative treatment for secondary complications, such as pressure ulcers and blood clots
- Therapy staff members who assess patients for the earliest opportunity to get out of bed, be mobile in a wheelchair, be able to communicate/swallow and begin the rehabilitation process
- A ventilator-weaning program for patients with high tetraplegia

Patients with catastrophic spinal cord injuries and illnesses who seek treatment at hospitals specializing in SCI are more likely to have fewer medical complications and achieve more independence.

Inpatient Rehabilitation Program

Long-term, successful community reintegration begins with the most comprehensive and experienced rehabilitation program. Our rehabilitation program includes:

- A comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach that benefits high-risk patients with more than one medical problem
- Functional training by therapy three to five hours each day, five days per week and one hour of individual, group or community-based therapy on Saturdays
- Repetitive task, activity-based interventions:
 1. Locomotor training through bodyweight-supported treadmill training for motor incomplete injuries
 2. Electrical stimulation cycling for patients who meet the criteria
 3. Aquatic program for patients who meet the criteria

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4. Specialized strength training in individual or group sessions.
- Specialized care teams include physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, dietitians, psychologists, counselors, chaplain, certified recreation therapists and an exercise physiologist, as appropriate.
 - Case managers to coordinate care and provide utilization review
 - Three to five full days of intensive family training and education to facilitate family caregiver participation
 - Psychological counseling to help provide the emotional support patients need to cope with a variety of issues
 - One-on-one and group peer visitation
 - Technology consults that focus on maximizing independence
 - Return-to-school programs for patients in high school

Day Rehabilitation Program

For patients who no longer need 24-hour medical supervision, but need at least two coordinated services, Shepherd Center's Day Program is ideal. Our core team consists of a physiatrist (as needed), nurses, physical therapists, occupational therapists, certified recreation therapists, counselors, educators, case managers, speech language pathologists and an exercise physiologist. Other services are consulted, if needed, on an individual basis.

Our Day Program services also include:

- Housing if both the patient and family live more than 60 miles from Shepherd Center.
- Lunch daily Monday – Friday. Caregivers must be able if you need assistance.

The day rehabilitation program is for patients who need and can benefit from five days of therapy per week, Monday through Friday. Patients need to be able to actively participate and have goals that support a minimum of three hours of treatment per day. Along with functional goals, treatment reinforces and promotes community reintegration.

Day Rehabilitation Program

Single or multiple service follow-up care is available five days a week in Shepherd Center's dedicated outpatient department. Our outpatient therapy team includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology and other services as needed. We offer specialized programs and clinics for outpatients with spinal cord injury, including:

- Upper-extremity clinic
- Lower-extremity bracing interventions
- Locomotor training through bodyweight-supported treadmill training or exoskeleton(robotic) training as appropriate via Shepherd Step
- Swallowing disorders clinic

Beyond Therapy®

Beyond Therapy is a rigorous, activity-based therapy program designed to help people with spinal cord injury, brain injury or multiple sclerosis improve their life-long health, minimize secondary complications and get the most out of any new neural links to their muscles. The staff consists of physical therapists and exercise specialists to integrate programs focusing on life-long wellness and maximization of muscle and neural return.

Learn more about Shepherd Center's Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program at shepherd.org/SCI.



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