

# Questions to Ask When Choosing a Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program



When choosing a rehabilitation program, you should feel confident about the quality of care you or your loved one will receive. We recommend that you compare options based on key criteria so that you can make an informed decision. Admissions staff can help answer these questions.

	Shepherd Center (A)	Hospital B	Hospital C
<b>1. Clinical Capabilities – Look for a specialized comprehensive program that is experienced caring for your type of injury for your age group.</b>			
A. Does the hospital specialize in spinal cord injury, or is it one of many services they offer?	Specialized		
B. How many patients are treated in the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program each year?	>250		
C. How many years of experience with spinal cord injury patients does the hospital have?	Since 1975		
D. What is the average age of patients in the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program?	41		
E. Does the hospital have special programs for adolescents and young adults?	Yes, we have an adolescent program and adulting program		
F. Is the facility equipped to manage life-threatening emergencies on-site?	Yes, we have a 10-bed ICU onsite		
G. Are patients able to begin rehabilitation if they have significant medical challenges?	Yes		
H. What is the patient to nurse ratio?	4-5:1 days, 5-6:1 nights Each RN has a PCT partner		
I. What stages of the continuum of care does the facility provide? Check all that apply:			
<input type="checkbox"/> A Intensive Care (ICU)	<input type="checkbox"/> A Outpatient Services	<input type="checkbox"/> C	
<input type="checkbox"/> B Inpatient Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/> B Transition Support Program	<input type="checkbox"/> C	
<input type="checkbox"/> C Post-Acute Rehabilitation (Day Program)	<input type="checkbox"/> C Ongoing Health and Wellness Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> C	
J. Does the hospital have a program specializing in high cervical injuries?	Yes, we have a HiTetra program		
<b>2. Counseling Capabilities – Look for a program with a variety of integrated supportive care services for patients and families going through a significant life event. Check all that apply.</b>			
<input type="checkbox"/> A Peer Support	<input type="checkbox"/> A Family Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> C	
<input type="checkbox"/> B Individual and Group Therapy	<input type="checkbox"/> B Vocational Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> C	
<input type="checkbox"/> C Psychotherapy	<input type="checkbox"/> C Substance Misuse Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> C	



**3. Quality Outcomes – Look for a program with engaged staff that has a track record of success in returning patients to healthy lives with purpose, and as much independence as possible.**

A. What percent of patients with spinal cord injury return home rather than go to long-term facilities?

93.9%

B. What percent of patients with spinal cord injury who arrive at Shepherd Center using a ventilator are able to wean from the ventilator?

83.4%  
\*5-year average

C. How many patients need rehospitalization for any reason within 30 days of discharge from their rehabilitation program?

Fewer than one in  
10 patients

D. How often and for how long each day do patients get treatment by specialists such as speech, recreation therapists, psychology, and neuropsychology if they are medically able?

3-6 hours every  
weekday & 1-2 hours  
on Saturdays.  
Sunday is for rest.

E. What is the employee engagement rate? This is a measure of the involvement and enthusiasm of employees in their work and workplace. The national average for all industries is 4.1 out of 5.0.

4.25 out of 5

F. Does the hospital have a clinical research program focused on improving treatments and outcomes?

Yes, typically  
95 active studies

**4. Family Experience – Look for a program that meets the needs of both patients and their families.**

A. Are there low-cost or funded living arrangements for family members? What is the cost?

Yes, at no charge

What style housing is it? How far from the hospital?

Private apartments on  
or about a block from  
of hospital campus

How long can you stay? How do you qualify?

One furnished family  
apartment is provided  
per patient for the  
duration of their  
treatment, subject to  
the following eligibility  
criteria. Inpatients:  
Both patient and  
family live more  
than 50 miles from  
Shepherd Center. Day  
Program: Both patient  
and family live more  
than 30 miles from  
Shepherd Center.

B. Are activities planned for patients on weekends and evenings?

Yes



B. Is there family counseling available?

Yes

D. Is there training for family members on how to be future caregivers?

Yes, considered essential

E. Is there support for after discharge?

Yes, Transition Support Program  
([shepherd.org/TSP](http://shepherd.org/TSP))

**5. Added Value Services – Look for services that go beyond the minimum covered by most insurance plans. Check all that apply.**

A

B

C

☐

☐

☐

Recreation Therapy

☐

☐

☐

Vocational Therapy

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☐

☐

Assistive Technology Consultations

A

B

C

☐

☐

☐

Adaptive Driving Instruction

☐

☐

☐

Peer Support

☐

☐

☐

Facility Animals Assisting with Independence and Emotional Support

**6. Awards, Recognitions, Accreditations - Look for a hospital that earns top marks and rankings**

A. Does the hospital have key recognitions and accreditations that help validate the organization's qualifications, including recognition as a Model System by the National Institutes of Health, accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), and recognition as a top hospital for rehabilitation by *U.S. News and World Report*?

*U.S. News and World Report* Best Hospital, CARF Accreditation, Spinal Cord Injury Model System, TBI Model System

**7. Learning More – Ensure all of your questions get answered and look for the ability to take a tour or talk to people who have been through the program.**

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With five decades of success, Shepherd Center provides world-class clinical care, research, and family support for people experiencing the most complex conditions, including spinal cord and brain injuries, stroke, multi-trauma, traumatic amputations, multiple sclerosis, and pain. An elite center ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the nation's top hospitals for rehabilitation, Shepherd Center is also recognized as both Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems. Shepherd Center treats thousands of patients annually with unmatched expertise and unwavering compassion to help them begin again.

To learn more about admission to Shepherd Center, visit **[shepherd.org/admissions](http://shepherd.org/admissions)** or call **1-800-SHEPHERD (800-743-7437)**.