

# Adolescent Rehabilitation Program – *Fact Sheet*

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Experience counts. Studies show that patients are more likely to experience fewer medical complications, achieve more functional independence and return to school community if they go to a hospital that treats a high volume of catastrophically injured patients.

Because all of our resources are devoted to treating central nervous system injuries and illnesses, Shepherd Center has more experience treating teenagers with these kinds of catastrophic brain and spinal cord injuries than general rehabilitation facilities. This experience – more than 100 adolescents age 12 to 21 each year – is reflected in our outcomes, which exceed national averages.

## **Treatment**

Shepherd Center treats more than 100 inpatient teenagers with catastrophic injuries each year.

Hundreds of teen patients are leading longer and better quality lives because of the acute care, rehabilitation and medical and surgical care available at Shepherd Center. Our adolescent track begins in the intensive care unit and focuses on a healthy lifestyle and the highest level of functioning and independence possible. It includes:

- An interdisciplinary approach to addressing the teen patient's special need for independence, socialization, age-appropriate activities, security and privacy.
- A physician-led, 10-member, dedicated treatment team.
- A focus on the involvement of family and friends.
- Private rooms to allow parents to spend the night, when possible.
- Education and training in problem solving, stigma management, self-advocacy, drug and alcohol awareness, self-care and sexuality.
- Care coordinated by a case manager who provides utilization review.

## **Education**

Staying on track academically is extremely important for injured teens. More than 90 percent of our spinal cord injured adolescent patients return to school within two weeks of discharge. Of those, 95 percent graduate on time with their class with their pre-injury GPA. For adolescents with a brain injury, 95 percent return to school within three to six months. Driving evaluations, augmentative communication assessments, and vocational assessments are another part of Shepherd's whole-patient approach to education.

## **Return to School Program**

Recognizing that adolescents rely on school experiences and positive peer interactions for much of their self-esteem and growth, Shepherd Center has developed a program to facilitate the back-to-school transition. Designed by the individual patient, the program can include in-school awareness and sensitivity training for school staff and students, as well as instruction in medical issues that may arise during the school day.



Shepherd Center

2020 Peachtree Road, NW  
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## Peer Support

Positive peer interaction post-injury is often a primary concern for adolescent patients, and Shepherd's program takes into account the very real need teens have to interact with people their own age. Group time is dedicated to discussion of day-to-day issues and potential medical safety issues involved in going out with friends, planning outings where accessibility may be a problem, going back to school, assertiveness, socialization and other matters.

## Outings

Shepherd's campus is ideally situated to provide teens with real life, urban experiences. Community outings that encourage teen participation promote problem solving and also give teens a chance to experience, as a group, the self consciousness that can come from having a disability. Therapists are on hand to provide logistical and moral support.

## Family and Sibling Support

Educating family members about spinal cord or traumatic brain injury and rehabilitation goes a long way in helping both the patient and the family adjust emotionally. A counselor with extensive adolescent treatment experience is available to meet with family members for this purpose.

## Neuropsychological Issues

A neuropsychologist with adolescent expertise provides assessment and care for teen patients with brain injury.

## About Shepherd Center

Shepherd Center is a private, not-for-profit hospital specializing in medical treatment, research and rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injury, brain injury, multiple sclerosis, spine and chronic pain, and other neuromuscular conditions. Founded in 1975, Shepherd Center is ranked by U.S. News & World Report among the top 10 rehabilitation hospitals in the nation. In its more than four decades, Shepherd Center has grown from a six-bed rehabilitation unit to a world-renowned, 152-bed hospital that treats more than 740 inpatients, nearly 280 day program patients and more than 7,100 outpatients each year in more than 46,000 visits.

## Important Phone Numbers

Main Switchboard: 404-352-2020

Admissions: 1-800-SHEPHERD or 404-350-7345

Visit Shepherd Center online at [shepherd.org](http://shepherd.org)



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