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

TREATMENT

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 high priority on the involvement of family and friends.
• Private rooms to allow patients 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 catastrophically 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.

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 treats more than 60 inpatient teenagers with catastrophic injuries each year. 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—approximately 60 youngsters age 12 to 17 each year—is reflected in our outcomes, which exceed national averages. For adolescents with a brain injury, 95 percent return to school within three to six months.

SHEPHERD CENTER TRANSITION SUPPORT PROGRAM - CASE MANAGEMENT

MISSION
The primary goal of the Transition Support Program is to prevent rehospitalization, improve health and safety outcomes, and promote patient and family autonomy once the patient is discharged from Shepherd Center. The Transition Support Program is offered to referred clients free of charge and provides an average of eight weeks of follow-up.

PROGRAM GOALS

• Assess clients for early prevention of medical complications.
• Reinforce knowledge and skills learned in hospital-based rehabilitation programs.
• Facilitate effective medication management.
• Provide recommendations for home safety.
• Assist in the identification of local community support services.

Clients entering the program will collaborate with a Transition Support case manager to achieve goals by:

• Following discharge plan and home care instructions to prevent rehospitalization.
• Developing a client-centered treatment plan in the home.
• Locating and utilizing appropriate community resources (financial, healthcare, wellness, etc).
• Developing self-advocacy for medical, health and wellness needs.

CONTACT INFORMATION

• Visit Shepherd Center online at shepherd.org
• Call Shepherd Center at 404-352-2020
• Contact the Transition Support Program at 404-367-1255 or laura_opry@shepherd.org
• For ongoing support and resources, visit MyShepherdConnection.org