

Questions to Ask When Choosing a Brain Injury or Complex Stroke 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
1. Clinical Capabilities – Look for a specialized comprehensive program that is experienced caring for your type of injury for your age group.			
A. Does the hospital specialize in brain injury and complex stroke, or is it one of many services they offer?	Specialized		
B. How many patients are treated in the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program each year?	>330		
C. How many years of experience with brain injury patients does the hospital have?	Since 1995		
D. What is the average age of patients in the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program?	37		
E. Does the hospital have a special program for adolescents and young adults?	Yes		
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. Does your program offer inpatient treatment for patients with a disorder of consciousness, including those in a coma, unresponsive wakefulness or minimally conscious state?	Yes		
I. What is the patient to nurse ratio?	4-5:1 days, 5-6:1 nights Each RN has a PCT partner		
J. What stages of the continuum of care does the facility provide? Check all that apply:			
☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Intensive Care (ICU)	☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Outpatient Services		
☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Inpatient Rehabilitation	☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Transition Support Program		
☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Post-Acute Rehabilitation (Day Program)	☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Ongoing Health and Wellness Activities		
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.			
☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Peer Support	☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Family Counseling		
☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Individual and Group Therapy	☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Vocational Counseling		
☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Psychotherapy	☒ A ☐ B ☐ C Substance Misuse Counseling		

**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 in brain injury and stroke rehabilitation return to home rather than go to long-term care facilities?

90.2%

B. What is the ventilator weaning rate for patients who arrive using a ventilator?

89% BI
72% Stroke
*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 5.0

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

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

Private apartments on
or about a block from
hospital campus

ii. 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 and families on weekends and evenings?

Yes



C. 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)

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

☒ ☐ ☐ 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, Traumatic Brain Injury Model System, Spinal Cord Injury 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** or call **1-800-SHEPHERD (800-743-7437)**.