

SPINAL CORD INJURY SERVICE INFOSHEET 2022

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VA Puget Sound Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Service

The SCI team is committed to providing high quality, comprehensive lifelong care to more than 900 Veterans with SCI living in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. Services offered include rehabilitation for new SCI, management of medical complications that may follow SCI, and outpatient primary and specialty care. The care is delivered in a collaborative, interdisciplinary manner.

Characteristics of Veterans with new SCI

Rehabilitation care is offered to Veterans based on their ability to participate in rehabilitation. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, 30 Veterans with new SCI participated in initial SCI rehabilitation. 14 Veterans met criteria for CIIRP (comprehensive integrated inpatient rehabilitation program), defined as having the ability to participate in 3 hours of rehabilitation per day. Sixteen Veterans received subacute level rehabilitation.

	CIIRP	Subacute
Average age	48 years	60 years
Gender	92% male	100% male
Cause of SCI	50% traumatic/50% non-traumatic	37.5% traumatic/62.5% non-traumatic
Level of SCI	3 low tetraplegia (AIS A-C) 1 paraplegia (AIS C) 10 AIS D	1 high tetraplegia 1 low tetraplegia 3 paraplegia 11 AIS D

Functional Outcomes of Inpatient SCI Rehabilitation

The Functional Independence Measurements (FIM) tool is used to measure independence in mobility and self-care, and to calculate functional gains with rehabilitation. All Veterans participating in CIIRP and subacute therapy made measurable gains.

	CIIRP	Subacute
Length of rehab stay	52.5 days	66.75
Discharge to home	83.3%	81.2%



SCI Veteran Outcomes

The SCI team collects information on Veterans with new onset SCI, health related performance measures, and other quality indicators as they relate to SCI care. Measures are reviewed regularly to ensure Veterans are benefiting from the care provided through our programs.

SCI Outpatient Therapy Services

Veterans work with SCI physical, occupational, and recreation therapy to achieve Veteran-specific goals using Goal Attainment Scoring (GAS).

2021: 75% visits were equipment related.

Goals are achieved in an average of 3 outpatient visits.



SCI Home Care

SCI Home Care services are available to eligible local Veterans. A registered nurse will visit the Veteran in the comfort of their own home and provides services, such as monthly catheter changes, mild wound care, and medication management.

418 home visits were completed in 2021.

SCI Video Telehealth

1,684 video telehealth encounters were completed in 2021.



Services include physician, nurse, psychology, social work, and physical, occupational, and recreation therapy appointments.

SCI Info Sheet 2021

VETERAN SATISFACTION



Feedback from Veterans about the quality of care received is essential for ongoing program improvement.

SCI Inpatient Satisfaction:
100% of patients “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I would recommend care with the SCI Service”.

SCI Outpatient Clinic Satisfaction:
78% of Veterans rated their outpatient visits 8-10/10 (10 is “best visit possible”)

“Having received services at the Seattle VA Spinal Cord Injury inpatient and outpatient units, I’ve come to appreciate the superb care and kind treatment received from all whom I’ve had the privilege of working with.”

-SCI Veteran since 1997

SCI Education and Research

The VA Puget Sound SCI team values education and research.

For Veterans with new SCI, a focused lecture series is offered during inpatient rehabilitation. Veterans with new SCI or new to VA Puget Sound SCI will receive a “Yes, You Can!” manual, a comprehensive guidebook published by the Paralyzed Veterans of America with contributions from VA Puget SCI team members.

The VA SCI Puget Sound SCI team is actively involved in community education. Medical trainees across all disciplines are offered quality training in SCI medicine. SCI team members serve on local and national committees including ASCIP, ASIA, ABPMR, ACR, ABPP and IWCC. SCI team members are involved in local and national research activities and collectively, have published over 100 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals.



SCI Veterans at VA Puget Sound

The VA Puget Sound SCI offers care to more than 900 Veterans living with SCI.

Average age	64 years
Gender	96% Male
Level of SCI	8% high tetraplegia (AIS A-C) 9% low tetraplegia (AIS A-C) 28% paraplegia (AIS A-C) 55% AIS D

SCI Inpatient Unit:
38 beds (4 private rooms, 5 2-bed rooms, 6 4-bed rooms).

SCI Outpatient Clinic: An extension of the Inpatient Unit, allowing for direct communication.

SCI and COVID-19 Pandemic



The COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges in delivering health care services. Despite the challenges, VA Puget Sound SCI team members created protocols to maximize safety during admission to the SCI Unit, conducted outreach calls, offered “virtual annual evaluations” to Veterans in their homes, operated a SCI vaccination clinic to deliver COVID-19 vaccines to local Veterans, and remained active in research, publishing 2 articles on COVID-19 in people with SCI.