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Shepherd Center

Annual Report – Fiscal Year 2024

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024



# Annual Report

## Annual Report—Fiscal Year 2024

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

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Dear Friends,

If you have driven along Peachtree Road recently, it's clear that Shepherd Center has broken ground – literally – on two new, state-of-the-art buildings: The Arthur M. Blank Family Residences, and the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation.

As these buildings progress from plots of land to construction sites to fully operational buildings for our patients, their families, and our staff, our dedicated team has continued to provide groundbreaking care and lead research that is poised to change lives for generations to come. I am excited to share our annual report for fiscal year 2024 (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024): **Breaking Ground**.

In this report, you'll learn more about how our amazing patients and their loved ones, with the expert guidance of our inpatient rehabilitation programs, community-based outpatient services, and research studies and trials, have learned to rebuild after injury and illness. With every milestone achieved, they have made groundbreaking progress and returned to their families, communities, and careers at rates higher than the national average.

You'll also learn how, in FY24, we met new milestones through **Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center**, moving closer to our goals of increasing patient access, investing in innovation, educating the next generation of neurorehabilitation experts, and improving the patient and family experience, thanks to the support of our donors, volunteers, staff, and community of supporters.

Finally, you'll get a view of our culture, which provides the blueprint for how we treat our patients, their families, and each other. It's one of progress and encouragement to be our best as individuals and as a team. While we've been recognized as both Spinal Cord Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems and ranked by U.S. News as one of the nation's top hospitals for rehabilitation, our true achievement lies in helping thousands of patients rebuild their lives after injury or illness.

We appreciate you taking the time to read this report and supporting us as we continue to break new ground.

Sincerely,  
Jamie Shepherd, MBA, MHA, FACHE  
CEO, Shepherd Center

# Shepherd Snapshot

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

With five decades of experience, Shepherd Center provides world-class clinical care, research, and family support for people experiencing the most complex conditions, including spinal cord and brain injuries, multi-trauma, traumatic amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and pain. An elite center ranked by *U.S. News* 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.



## Inpatient Discharges By Location

Georgia	495
Tennessee	93
Alabama	76
South Carolina	61
North Carolina	57
Florida	47
Virginia	40
Mississippi	18
Kentucky	16
West Virginia	7
Arkansas	6
Missouri	6
Pennsylvania	6
New York	5
California	4
Ohio	4
Oklahoma	4
Louisiana	3
Maryland	3
Arizona	2
Massachusetts	2
New Jersey	2
Indiana	1
Kansas	1
Michigan	1
Minnesota	1
New Hampshire	1
Virgin Islands	1
International	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>965</b>

## Patients Served in FY24

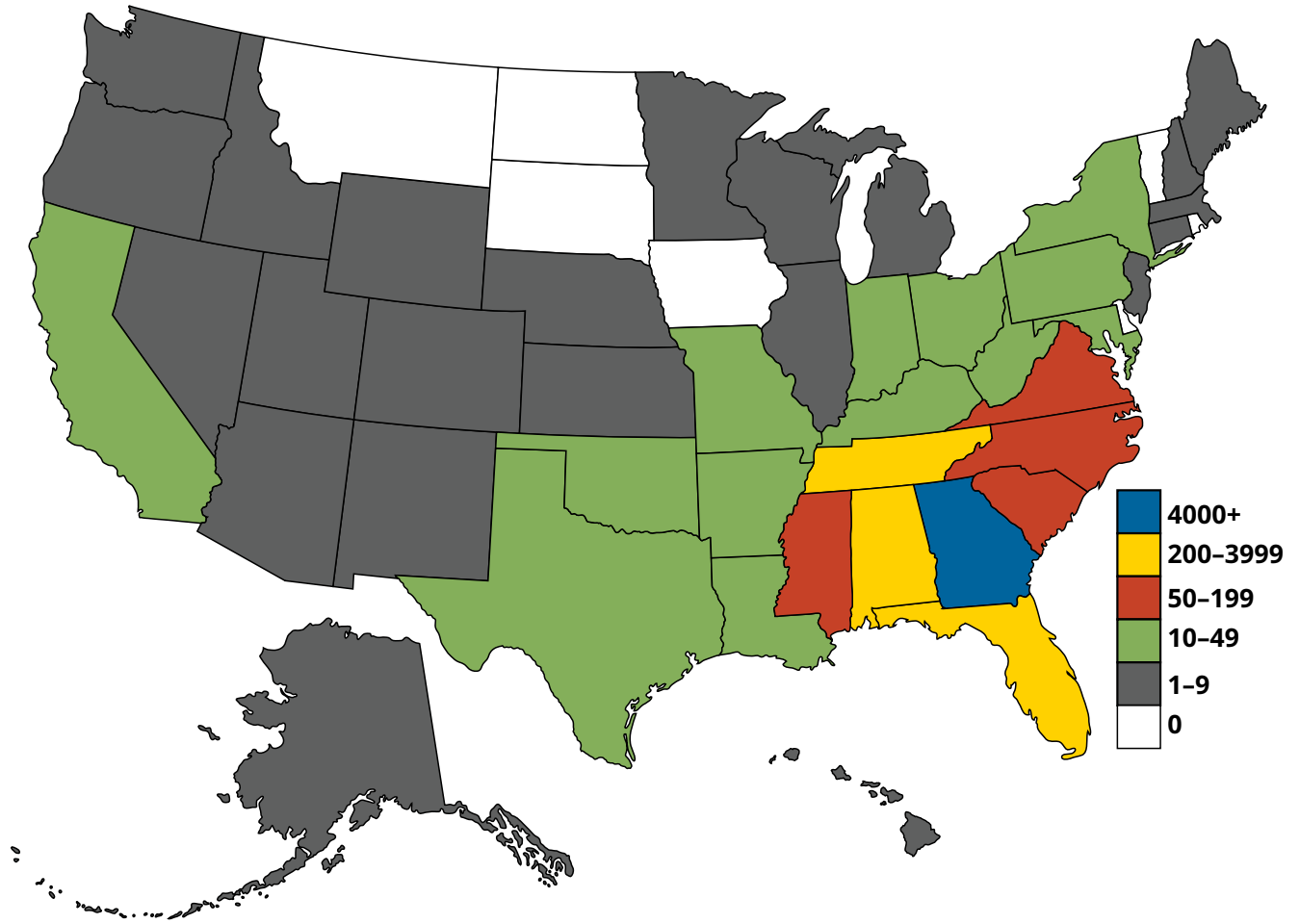
Category	Discharges
Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)	288
Acquired Brain Injury (ABI)	333
Stroke	164
Dual Diagnosis (SCI and ABI)	91
Neurological	29
Skin, Wound	26
Other	34

**Total Inpatients Discharged from Shepherd Center** 965

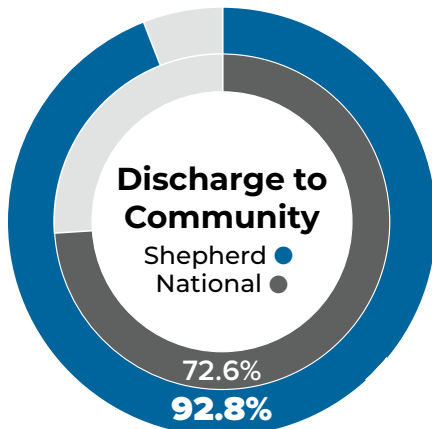
**Unique Outpatients Served at Shepherd Center** 8,100+

**Patients at Shepherd Center come from across the country.**

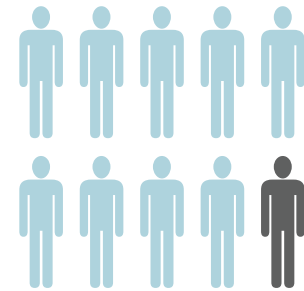
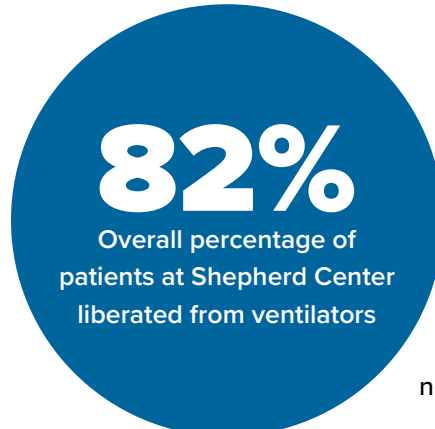
# Inpatient Referrals by State, FY24



## Patient Outcomes



Percentage of rehabilitation patients who were able to return to the community after rehabilitation



**Only 1 in 10 patients** needed rehospitalization for any reason within 30 days of discharge from Shepherd Center. This very low rate results from Shepherd's focus on patient and family training and transition support.

Data Source: Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation (UDS) and Epic

# Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program

## Helping Patients and Families Rebuild

Every year, hundreds of patients and families from near and far travel to Shepherd Center to receive our unique brand of rehabilitation and care. For many patients and families, their Shepherd Center experience begins in our on-site 10-bed intensive care unit. It then progresses to inpatient rehabilitation, which includes rehabilitation in multiple disciplines and family support and training. Once patients no longer need 24-hour medical care, they may move on to our day program. From there, various outpatient services, including Beyond Therapy®, health and wellness activities, and vocational support, are available to help patients and families continue to build upon gains they have made while at Shepherd Center.

## Providing Care Built on a Foundation of Expertise

In FY24, Shepherd Center continued to help rebuild the lives of those living with the most complex injuries. More than 76.7% of patients with spinal cord injuries at Shepherd Center had traumatic injuries, compared to 22.3% nationwide. In FY24, our ventilator services team liberated 81.6% of patients with spinal cord injuries who were using ventilators when they arrived at Shepherd Center. 100% of patients with an injury lower than C-5 were successfully weaned from ventilators.

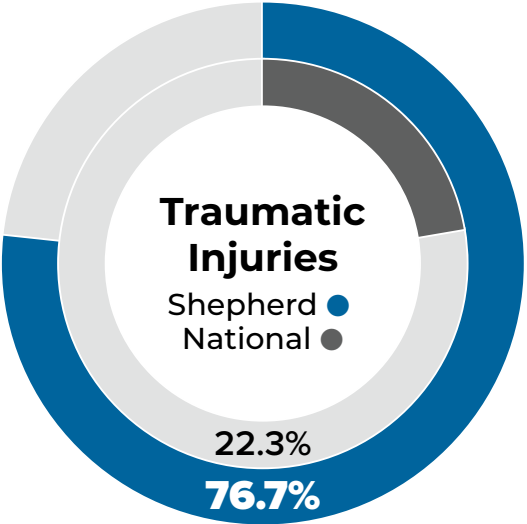
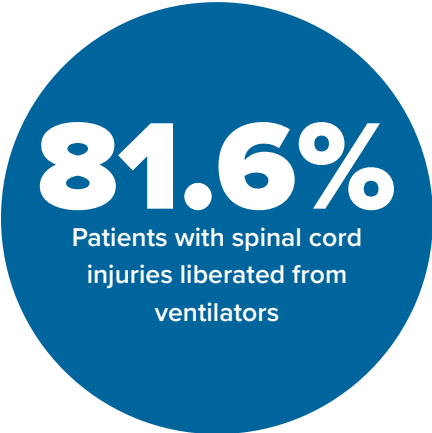
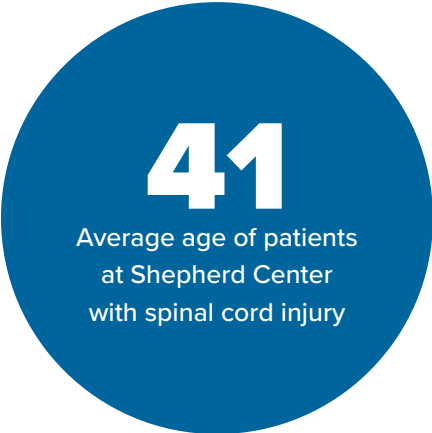
In our Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program, we build a foundation for healing to help patients and families set and reach their goals. With their courage and resolve and the unmatched expertise and unwavering compassion of our staff, Shepherd Center patients with traumatic spinal cord injuries were able to return to their communities at a rate 20% higher than the national average.



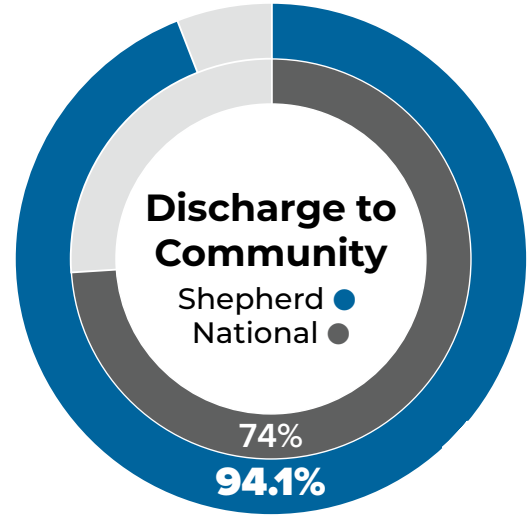


# Extraordinary Care for Extraordinary Outcomes: Spinal Cord Injury

FY24 (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024)



**76.7%**  
Percentage of patients at Shepherd Center whose spinal cord injuries were traumatic, compared to 22.3% nationwide



**94.1%**  
of patients with traumatic spinal cord injuries were able to return to the community after rehabilitation at Shepherd Center instead of going to an additional care facility, compared to 74% nationwide.

Data Source: Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation (UDS) and Epic



## Helping Patients Start Anew

Because no two patients are the same, we work from a blueprint for care that can be customized for each patient. Fortunately, we have seen what rebuilding looks like for thousands of patients and their families. Simply put, we see each patient as full of possibilities. With that in mind, in FY24, we championed programs that help patients well beyond their time at Shepherd Center.

- **Igniting Conversations on Sexuality and Intimacy:** While clinicians and patients at Shepherd understand that the human need for intimacy does not end when a spinal cord injury occurs, actually approaching the subject can be understandably awkward. To break down those barriers, a task force within the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program began by surveying staff on their comfort and knowledge related to educating patients and caregivers on sexuality and intimacy concerns. Based on the survey results, they rolled out online education for all disciplines to gain comfort and understanding of educating patients and caregivers on sexuality and intimacy. The team also hosted a sexuality and intimacy fair for staff with stations on medication/nutrition, medical management of bowel and bladder, and caregiver versus partner role, among others. Pre-education and post-education survey results indicated a clear increase in comfort and knowledge of educating patients regarding sexuality and intimacy. Finally, the staff worked with their colleagues in psychology to create a “ready for sexuality and intimacy education” order in Shepherd’s electronic medical record, Epic, that psychology staff enter when a patient is safe and ready to explore sensitive topics.

➤ **Helping Patients Reach New HiTes:**

Each year, Shepherd serves many patients with high-level tetraplegia. Needs of people with high-level spinal cord injuries—C1–C4—often include breathing assistance, bowel and bladder management, specialized equipment, and caregiver assistance, among others. With those needs in mind, Shepherd Center created the High Tetraplegia (HiTe) Program. While the program has been in existence for years, FY24 brought updates to the program based on patients’ growing needs, including adding an activities-based treatment group focused on respiratory strengthening with functional electrical stimulation, incorporating an automated self-feeding device for patients to use on meal outings, increasing community outings to twice a month, and adding additional bladder education classes since patients with high tetraplegia are at greater risk of rehospitalization due to bladder-related issues. The additions join existing classes in assistive technology, caregiver considerations, animal assistance programs, emergency preparedness, and respiratory needs.

➤ **Keeping Adolescents and Young Adults Connected:**

Patients who are injured or experience illness during their adolescent years have unique needs related to socialization and connection. Enter the Keeping Adolescents & Young Adults Connected (KAYAC) Program, which aims to address a gap in access to resources and support for adolescents and young adult survivors of spinal cord injury (SCI) or acquired brain injury (ABI). These efforts have primarily been three-pronged: 1) to establish an age-specific peer support program; 2) to collect formal and informal data for ongoing program evaluation and



**“I was blown away by my treatment at Shepherd Center. From the moment I got there to the moment I left, I was treated like family.”**

Alan Loving  
Patient, Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program

**Scan the QR code or visit the Shepherd Center website to read more of Alan’s story:**



improvement; and 3) to develop a virtual resource toolkit. In collaboration with the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation (CDRF), KAYAC trained seven former Shepherd Center patients with SCI to be peer mentors. KAYAC began matching mentors to mentees in May 2023. Since then, KAYAC mentors have been matched with 18 Shepherd Center patients and 11 CDRF clients across North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Florida, California, Ohio, Iowa, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. The KAYAC team created an internal ABI Peer Mentor Training course and is recruiting ABI peer mentors. KAYAC also developed an internal SCI Peer Mentor Training. Two KAYAC mentors have decided to pursue careers as rehabilitation psychologists because of their experiences receiving counseling after their injuries and mentoring newly injured peers. Additionally, KAYAC completed focus groups with former patients who were adolescents and young adults at the time of injury to explore the need for supporting community reintegration following paralysis and/or ABI. The team presented findings from the focus groups at the 2023 ASIA Conference, the 2023 Division 22 Rehabilitation Psychology Conference, and the 2024 Division 22 Rehabilitation Psychology Conference. ▲





# Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program

## Helping Patients and Families Rebuild

In FY24, hundreds of patients and families rebuilding their lives after brain injuries, illnesses, and strokes sought care at Shepherd Center's Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program. Patients in low-level states of consciousness caused by a brain injury or stroke sometimes begin their stay at Shepherd Center in our unique Disorders of Consciousness (DoC) program, which can better meet their specific needs. Some of our patients enter Shepherd Center through our ICU before progressing to inpatient rehabilitation. Shepherd Pathways, Shepherd Center's outpatient rehabilitation program for people recovering from brain injury, extends rehabilitation in an outpatient setting for 50% of the inpatients with brain injury. Patients in the Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program also have access to the Vision Clinic, specialty outpatient services, vocational therapy and counseling, transition support, Beyond Therapy, and health and wellness clinics.

## Providing Care Built on a Foundation of Expertise

In FY24, more than 75.3% of patients with brain injuries at Shepherd Center had traumatic injuries, compared to 31.5% at other facilities, meaning we see patients with the most complex injuries. With such high volumes, the team at Shepherd Center has more experience dealing with all levels of brain injuries, including those in people who use a ventilator for breathing. In FY24, the ventilator services team was able to wean 89% of patients with brain injuries and 100% who had had strokes and were using ventilators when they arrived at Shepherd Center.

# Extraordinary Care for Extraordinary Outcomes: Acquired and Traumatic Brain Injury

FY24 (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024)

**333**

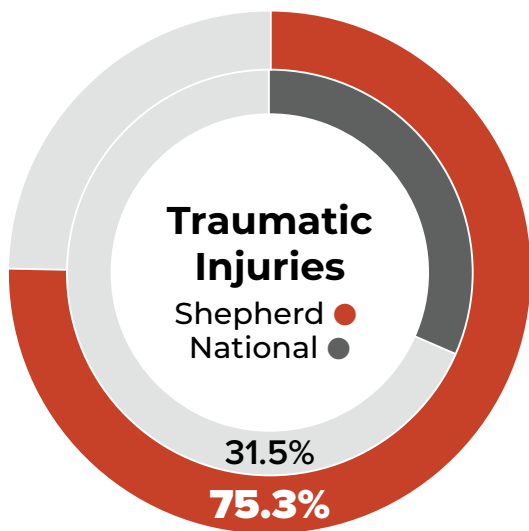
Inpatients with traumatic and acquired brain injuries discharged from the Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program

**37**

Average age of patients at Shepherd Center with brain injury

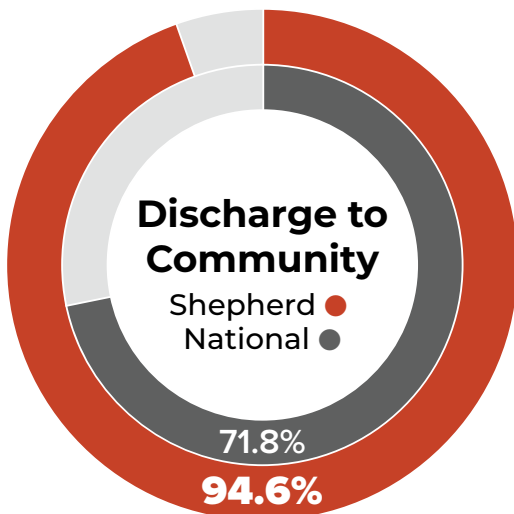
**89%**

Percentage of patients with brain injuries liberated from ventilators



**75.3%**

Percentage of patients at Shepherd Center whose brain injuries were traumatic, compared to 31.5% nationwide



**94.6%**

of patients with traumatic brain injuries were able to return to the community after rehabilitation at Shepherd Center instead of going to an additional care facility, compared to 71.8% nationwide.

Data Source: Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation (UDS) and Epic





# Stroke

FY24 (April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024)

**164**

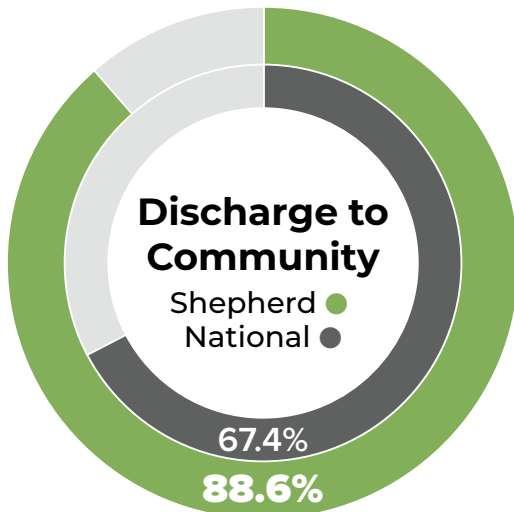
Inpatients with stroke who discharged from the Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program

**51**

Average age of patients at Shepherd Center who are rehabilitating after a stroke

**100%**

Percentage of patients with strokes liberated from ventilators



**88.6%**

of patients with strokes were able to return to the community after rehabilitation at Shepherd Center instead of going to an additional care facility, compared to 67.4% nationwide.

Data Source: Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation (UDS) and Epic

# Helping Patients Begin Anew

Every brain injury is as unique as the person and family it affects – and Shepherd Center’s team develops a personalized blueprint to help patients set and reach their goals while also building a supportive unit of care through caregiver training, education, and support for returning home. For every patient in our Acquired Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program, we utilize the most impactful rehabilitation innovations, delivered with Shepherd Center’s trademark hope, heart, and humor.

- **Getting People Back to Work After Brain Injury:** Shepherd Center is the Georgia Model Brain Injury System (GAMBIS). In FY24, GAMBIS continued a site-specific study to determine if hospital-based transitional vocational rehabilitation, such as Shepherd Center’s Transition Support Program, and transitional vocational rehabilitation with on-the-job-training interventions can help improve the employment, health, and community participation outcomes of individuals with traumatic brain injuries

(TBI). In FY24, the study referred 42 people with brain injuries to the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). While participants are in various stages of the process, four have become successfully employed with the help of the study. Brick Johnstone, Ph.D., the O. Wayne Rollins Director of Brain Injury Research at Shepherd Center, has presented preliminary findings of the study to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, at the Agrability National Training Workshop, and at the Missouri Brain Injury Association Annual Conference. The study aims to build support and funding for hospital-based vocational rehabilitation from private and government insurance programs and increase on-the-job training, which is currently offered infrequently.

- **Igniting Conversations on Sexuality and Intimacy:** Sexuality and intimacy are integral parts of the human experience. Still, brain injury can make both more challenging for people and their partners and healthcare providers tasked with providing education. After a 2019 survey showed that a majority of providers – 68% of them – said they

had not had any training or education regarding sexuality and intimacy for persons with acquired brain injury, an overwhelming number – 92% – of the providers who responded agreed that there is a need and desire for more formal training on how to talk about it with patients and caregivers. In FY24, Acquired



Brain Injury Rehabilitation workgroup leaders – including clinicians from inpatient rehabilitation, Shepherd Pathways, the Complex Concussion Clinic, and SHARE Military Initiative, created a foundation to incorporate the Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems (TBIMS) Leadership Collaboration Guidelines for sexuality into the culture of rehabilitation at Shepherd and beyond. Efforts in FY24 focused largely on staff education, process mapping, and documentation.

- **Supporting Recovery at Home:** Developing a home exercise program is an essential part of brain injury rehabilitation. In FY24, clinicians at Shepherd Pathways began using Pt Pal, a platform that allows them to communicate with patients about their home exercise programs through interactive information delivered directly to them via the Pt Pal app to improve patient outcomes through increased adherence to their prescribed home exercise programs. Pt Pal data is connected with data from Epic, Shepherd Center’s electronic medical record platform. This allows clinicians to easily access patient data and lends itself to optimal clinician engagement. All primary clinicians have been issued individual iPads for working directly with their patients, allowing for ease in preparation for treatment and real-time engagement. Pt Pal is now mandatory for all patients at Shepherd Pathways, and clinicians prescribe each patient their first home exercise program within the initial two weeks of treatment. Through Pt Pal, clinicians modify or update the patient’s home exercise program at the halfway point of the client’s estimated length of stay, if not sooner. All patients’ home exercise programs are reviewed on a biweekly basis, preferably with the client. Currently, members of the therapy and research teams are closely monitoring each dashboard and will use advanced analytics to examine the effects of Pt Pal on home exercise adherence. ▲



**“The minute we got there, therapists started working with him,” she recalls. “I had this tremendous sense of relief that things were progressing. God gave us so many miracles, and one of them was Shepherd Center. Thank you just doesn’t seem to be enough.”**

Mihret Hamda  
Mother of former patient Ole Djalleta,  
Brain Injury Rehabilitation Program

**Scan the QR code or visit the Shepherd Center website to read more of Ole’s story:**



# Specialized Inpatient Care

## Intensive Care Unit

Shepherd Center's comprehensive continuum of care includes a 10-bed intensive care unit (ICU). It is the only freestanding rehabilitation hospital focusing on brain and spinal cord injuries nationwide with an ICU on site. When patients transfer to Shepherd from the ICU at an acute care hospital, many are admitted to Shepherd's ICU, providing a solid foundation for rehabilitation to begin more quickly after injury, usually within the first 24 hours of admission to Shepherd Center.

At Shepherd, with ICU-level support available, patients who use a ventilator to aid with breathing can move out of the ICU to one of the rehabilitation floors safely, building the bridge from critical care to their return to their communities. That's a significant advantage for people who may use a ventilator long-term. Patients ready to breathe independently, without the assistance of a ventilator, return to the ICU for their first 24 hours off the ventilator to allow for closer monitoring.

And, if a patient experiences a medical setback, the value of an on-site ICU becomes even more apparent. For example, if a patient is in a rehabilitation facility without an ICU and develops complications, they would need to be discharged from that rehab hospital, admitted to a local acute care facility, and then readmitted to rehab once stabilized. Additionally, it gives peace of mind to caregivers and patients, knowing that vent weaning and changes in medical status can be expertly managed within Shepherd Center.



**“We treat patients with complicated conditions that many organizations would shy away from, and the ICU is a big factor in our ability to do that. There is a comfort level knowing that if a person needs to go to the ICU, then we can do it.”**

Tiffany LeCroy, MSN, RN, CRRN, FNP-C,  
ACNS-BC, FARN





## A Doctor Who's Been There

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### Woody Morgan, M.D., Returns to Shepherd Center as Attending Physician on CRU

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Fifteen years after sustaining a spinal cord injury in a diving accident in the Gulf of Mexico, Woody Morgan, M.D., returned to Shepherd Center – this time as the attending physician on CRU. There, he provides care for patients experiencing spinal cord and brain injuries, multi-trauma, traumatic amputations, dual diagnoses, stroke, and other neurological conditions.

Before his injury, Dr. Morgan planned to study orthopedics and sports medicine. His career changed course after working with the physiatrists while he was a patient at Shepherd Center. John Lin, M.D., medical director of the Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Program, in particular, inspired Dr. Morgan. Dr. Lin has paralysis and uses a wheelchair due to an aneurysm-like condition known as epidural arteriovenous malformation.

Dr. Morgan attended medical school at Tulane University School of Medicine, after which he completed his residency training in physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) at Harvard Medical School, followed by a fellowship in spinal cord injury medicine at Craig Hospital/University of Colorado. Most recently, Dr. Morgan served as assistant professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation and medical director of the spinal cord injury program at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Not only do his education and qualifications stack up, but having sustained an injury himself has allowed him to connect with patients on a deeper level.

“I go into a room, and I have some credibility right away,” Dr. Morgan says. “It can help you connect quicker, can mean a little something extra with patients sometimes, knowing that you’ve been where they are.”

# Comprehensive Rehabilitation Unit (CRU)

Research shows that patients with catastrophic injuries and illnesses who seek treatment at hospitals specializing in complex rehabilitation are more likely to have fewer medical complications and achieve more independence. Shepherd Center's Comprehensive Rehabilitation Unit (CRU) offers highly specialized care to people rebuilding their lives after the most complex medical issues, including multiple traumas, traumatic amputations, dual diagnoses of spinal cord and brain injuries, pulmonary complications, multiple orthopedic injuries, pressure injuries, and new or complicated diagnosis of neurological disease.

The expert team in the CRU is cross-trained and has a breadth of experience in caring for patients' advanced medical needs while also helping them begin the rehabilitation process as early as possible. All patients and families in the CRU are assigned a consistent medical team that includes a physician and advanced practice providers, nursing and physical, occupational, speech, respiratory, and recreation therapists, a case manager, a dietician, and a psychologist. ▲





# SHARE Military Initiative at Shepherd Center

Shepherd Center extends its reach to people with brain injuries through the SHARE Military Initiative, which cared for 127 military veterans, service members, and first responders in FY24 who were ready to accept help and healing for their daily struggle with traumatic brain injuries and mental health concerns. SHARE provides comprehensive rehabilitation with flexible programming options, collaborative care, community reintegration, and donor-funded housing.

Transition specialists provided dedicated support for one year after graduating from the program, following 117 SHARE graduates with more than 632 meetings, phone calls, and visits to clients' homes and communities as far away as Alaska and as close as metro Atlanta. These services support SHARE clients by maintaining what has been accomplished in the program and encouraging continued improvement through reinforcing strategies, providing advocacy, connecting to local resources, and educating clients, family members, and circles of support.

SHARE continued to break down barriers to care through its implementation of programming for clients with co-occurring substance use and TBI. The program continues to allow access to TBI treatment for individuals with co-occurring substance use who may have previously been denied treatment access. During FY24, SHARE had a graduation rate of 95.6% among those with co-occurring TBI and substance use who participated in treatment in this program.

Thanks to the support of generous donors and Shepherd's Men, a group of service members and volunteers, care through SHARE is available at no cost to clients so that they can embark on a truly individualized and impactful path to renewed relationships, purpose, and life. ▲



**“My story started at SHARE,”  
Bill says of his transformation.  
“Everything else was a lead-up to  
that. The people there care about  
you walking out of there better  
than you walked in. It’s the most  
amazing place in the world.”**

SHARE graduate Bill Duncan

**Scan the QR code or visit the  
Shepherd Center website  
to read more of Bill’s story:**







# Community-Based Programs

Recovery from complex injuries and conditions requires lifelong care and unwavering support. Shepherd Center offers a range of specialized outpatient clinics and comprehensive services designed to help patients and their families build their community of care.

Our community-based services are staffed by a compassionate and highly skilled team dedicated to tailoring personalized care plans. In addition to our outpatient clinics, we also offer various outpatient services to support the rehabilitation journey. These services include state-of-the-art imaging facilities for accurate diagnosis, telehealth options for virtual follow-ups, vocational rehabilitation programs to assist with returning to work, and much more. In FY24, our community-based programs served over 8,100 unique patients in over 67,000 visits.

## Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic

Our Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic, formerly known as the Multi-Specialty Clinic, caters to individuals at different stages of their neurological rehabilitation journey, encompassing a range of conditions such as spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, cerebrovascular accidents, transverse myelitis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, and other complex medical conditions. Our comprehensive team includes physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, medical assistants, and case managers to coordinate care throughout life. In FY24, the Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic served 2,200 patients in 5,081 visits.

## Beyond Therapy®

Beyond Therapy is Shepherd Center's rigorous, activity-based program designed to help people with various neurological disorders improve lifelong health, minimize secondary complications, and get the most from any new neural links to their muscles. In FY24, 77 patients benefitted from 7,623 visits to Beyond Therapy.



**“Both times, the team at Shepherd was dedicated to making me better. I was in a partnership with each of the therapists. I am really grateful to all of them for getting me in a good spot to return to life.”**

Eva Van De Water  
Two-time Patient, Complex Concussion Clinic  
at Shepherd Center

**Scan the QR code or visit the Shepherd Center website to read more of Eva's story:**



## Complex Concussion Clinic (CCC)

Concussions can occur as a result of playing sports, car crashes, falls, and other accidents. In most people, concussion symptoms resolve within three to four weeks, but for others – about 20% – their symptoms last well beyond that, with complications that fall beyond the scope of primary care physicians and general neurologists. Fortunately, for these cases, Shepherd Center's Complex Concussion Clinic specializes in identifying and treating symptoms to help people get better and return to their lives. The CCC treated 513 patients through 5,576 visits in FY24.

## Upper Extremity Rehabilitation Clinic

The Upper Extremity Clinic at Shepherd Center offers therapy and treatment to improve arm, wrist, and hand function for individuals recovering from neurological, orthopedic, or peripheral nerve injuries. The Upper Extremity Clinic at Shepherd Center served 101 patients in 224 visits in FY24.

## Outpatient Urology Clinic

Shepherd Center offers specialized outpatient care focused on the long-term management of complex urinary complications, such as neurogenic bladder, resulting from spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, or other neurological conditions like stroke or multiple sclerosis. In FY24, the Urology Clinic served 521 patients in 1,425 visits.



## Dean Stroud Spine and Pain Institute at Shepherd Center

The Spine and Pain Institute at Shepherd Center is a specialized pain clinic that focuses on restoring function, improving quality of life, and reducing dependence on medications while enhancing psychological well-being and independence. Adding Michael Smith, D.O., to its medical staff allowed the Spine and Pain Institute to provide more patients with comprehensive care. In FY24, 1,401 patients received care in 9,226 visits.

## Imaging Services

To help care flow as seamlessly as possible, Shepherd Center has onsite imaging and radiology services for outpatients, inpatients, and community members. Shepherd Center offers X-ray, CT, ultrasound, and 3.0 Tesla MRI, adding precision and convenience to patient care. The department served 3,063 patients in 5,247 outpatient procedures in FY24.



**“MS can be overwhelming, especially if you don’t have a place where you can get physical and emotional support. Shepherd Center does that. Everything you need is right there. It is a life-changing, life-affirming place.”**

Greta Anderson  
Patient, MS Institute

**Scan the QR code or visit the Shepherd Center website to read more of Greta’s story:**



## Andrew C. Carlos Multiple Sclerosis Institute

As the most comprehensive program for people with multiple sclerosis (MS) in the Southeast, the MS Institute at Shepherd Center has treated thousands of people with MS, including 2,958 through 13,820 visits in FY24, using a wide range of neurological and rehabilitative services. This comprehensive program offers treatment through FDA-approved medications, research opportunities, and neuropsychological services for individuals living with MS.

## Eula C. and Andrew C. Carlos Multiple Sclerosis Rehabilitation and Wellness Program

An integrated partner to our MS Institute, the MS Rehabilitation and Wellness Program supports a healthy lifestyle with group classes for exercise, education, and social activities while offering individual sessions with an exercise physiologist to create a personalized exercise program. In FY24, 513 patients received care in 7,713 visits.

# Driving Evaluation and Rehabilitation Program

Shepherd Center's Driving Assessment and Rehabilitation Program helps clients evaluate, understand, and use available transportation options after experiencing a loss in mobility. Staff members address safety and accessibility issues and the unique transportation concerns of people using power wheelchairs. Mobility evaluations include on-the-road examinations, lessons, and fittings for vehicle modifications. In FY24, 493 patients visited Adaptive Driving Services in 709 visits.

## Wheelchair Seating and Mobility Clinic

The Wheelchair Seating & Mobility Clinic offers various seating and mobility services for people with disabilities. Therapists help clients make personalized decisions about seating and mobility devices to address their needs and meet their lifestyle goals. The Wheelchair Seating & Mobility Clinic served 1,512 patients in 2,282 visits in FY24.

## Transition Support Services

The Transition Support Program prevents rehospitalization, improves health and safety outcomes, and promotes patient and family autonomy once the patient is discharged from Shepherd Center, providing an average of eight weeks of follow-up support. Referred clients enroll in the Transition Support Program free of charge. In FY24, Transition Support served 220 individuals.



**“She [Lakisha Gray, driving specialist] took me to different places during the week, learning how to yield, how to merge into traffic, when to brake, and when not to. I was nervous all week until the day of my driving test. But Lakisha walked me through the steps of what to do and what not to do, and that Friday morning, I took my driving test.”**

Egypt Lundy

Patient, Driving Evaluation and Rehabilitation Program

**Scan the QR code or visit the Shepherd Center website to read more of Egypt's story:**



# Access Technology Lab

In our Access Technology Lab, patients can be set up with assistive devices and technology to make it easier to complete daily tasks and improve the quality of their lives. Shepherd Center offers consultations by assistive device specialists to recommend tools or technology to support greater independence for people with disabilities or injuries. In FY24, in addition to serving inpatients, the team in the Assistive Technology Lab served 50 patients on an outpatient basis.





## Neuropsychology Outpatient Therapy Clinic

In Shepherd Center's Neuropsychology Outpatient Clinic, neuropsychologists perform comprehensive neuropsych evaluations for individuals with concerns about their thinking abilities. Patient questions often relate to specific conditions associated with changes in cognition, such as Alzheimer's disease, brain tumors, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, stroke, traumatic brain injury, and others. In FY24, providers saw more than 1,177 patients in over 8,333 visits.

## Wound Clinic

Shepherd Center's Wound Clinic provides specialized outpatient care dedicated to preventing, managing, and treating chronic wounds. Individuals with complex neurological injuries or conditions are particularly susceptible to developing chronic wounds, whether linked to the initial injury or the onset of the underlying condition. Shepherd Center's Wound Clinic team understands the diverse challenges associated with chronic wounds and is committed to delivering comprehensive care tailored to each patient's unique needs. In FY24, 179 patients received care in 461 visits to the Wound Clinic.

# Adapting to our Patients' Needs

We developed our community-based outpatient programs based on our community's and patients' needs and feedback. And when we need to make adjustments or add services, we thrive on listening to our patients and staff to help them build a strong foundation of health. In FY24, we did this by:

- **Shepherd Spine and Pain Institute Adds New Providers to Medical Staff:** In September 2023, Michael Smith, D.O., joined Shepherd Center's medical staff as a physiatrist caring for patients in the Dean Stroud Spine and Pain Institute at Shepherd Center. Dr. Smith joined Erik Shaw, D.O., medical director of the Pain Institute, who has been caring for patients there since 2006. Also in 2023, Etsegenet "Mimi" Endale, DNP, FNP-C, and Amy Hartline, AGACNP-BC, joined the Pain Institute as Advanced Practice Providers. The addition of these providers allow the team in the Pain Institute to increase overall capacity and utilization for patients who need comprehensive care for pain.
- **MS Offers Collaboration, New Treatments:** In FY24, Shepherd Center's MS Institute collaborated with We Are Ill, a patient advocacy organization for Black women living with multiple sclerosis (MS). The four-part collaboration consisted of on-site and virtual sessions including Ask the Neurologist, Ask the MS Nurse, Ask the MS Case Manager, and Ask the MS Counselor, all of which featured experts from the MS Institute. Also in FY24, the MS Institute launched two new infusion medications. This included making adjustments in Epic, Shepherd Center's electronic medical records, working with Shepherd's financial team, updating billing and coding,



training nurses and staff, and collaborating with external pharmacological companies. The MS Institute has infused 69 patients with Briumvi®, an FDA-approved medication for the treatment of relapsing forms of MS. The MS Institute has infused 10 patients with Uplizna®, an FDA-approved medication for the treatment of neuromyelitis optica (NMO). Prior to onboarding Uplizna, the MS Institute did not have an FDA-approved treatment for NMO.

- **Complex Concussion Clinic Researchers Study Driving After a Concussion:** More than 3.8 million concussions occur annually in the United States, many of which occur in adolescents and young adults. Despite concerns over post-concussion driving safety, there is scant evidence to support return to driving decision-making among sports medicine specialists. Initial research indicates that only 44% of concussed individuals reduce their driving and often only for 24-48 hours. To fill this knowledge gap, researchers at Shepherd Center's Complex Concussion Clinic and the University of Georgia completed a study to identify driving impairments post-concussion and determine concussion assessments predicting driving impairment. Supported by Andee's Army Child Brain and Spinal Cord Foundation, the study found that those who had sustained concussions showed more impaired driving patterns within 72 hours of injury, drove more conservatively once asymptomatic, and had similar driving performance at the time they returned fully to sport. Results from this work were published in the *American Journal of Sports Medicine*. The research team is working with parents, patients, schools, and hospitals to translate these findings and develop strategies to educate and advocate for patients and their families. This initial work led to a larger study with a focus on college athletes funded by the National Institutes of Health. ▲





# Research and Innovation

Already a world-renowned research hub for decades, Shepherd Center is now poised to break new ground as it builds upon research and innovation in the neurorehabilitation field. Shepherd Center's robust research program, which includes access to patient populations, clinical expertise, decades of patient data, industry partnerships, and a compassionate approach, has primed Shepherd Center to do this work to improve neurorehabilitative care for generations to come.

Our researchers innovate across the broad spectrum of research to develop, refine, and evaluate new treatments, medications, surgical

techniques, diagnostic tools, and therapeutic interventions. In collaboration with academic and industry partners, we work to engineer new products and tools and advise industry partners on making the world more accessible for people with disabilities. In FY24, more than 3,200 people participated in 83 active studies, and Shepherd Center researchers and clinicians had 76 publications and gave more than 70 presentations. At Shepherd Center, our researchers have been awarded grants from top federal funding agencies to advance the science of clinical care and quality of life for people with disabilities. Our research falls into five areas:

► **Spinal Cord Injury Research:** Shepherd Center has been designated as a Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SCIMS) for more than 40 years, making it part of the largest network of research centers devoted to SCI in the world. To advance knowledge on the best care for people with spinal cord injuries, investigators in the Hulse Spinal Cord Injury Lab at Shepherd Center conduct translational and clinical research focused on neurorehabilitation and neuromodulation approaches. These studies employ clinically accessible forms of brain stimulation, spinal stimulation, and nerve stimulation to optimize the outcomes of rehabilitation interventions. In FY24, Shepherd Center researchers led studies funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), as well as a foundation-funded study focusing on restoring function and improving the lives of people with spinal cord injuries. In addition to the studies performed within the Hulse Lab, the Shepherd SCI Research Team also collaborates on research projects with their SCI research colleagues across the U.S. and internationally.

► **Brain Injury Research:** In FY24, Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative received a prestigious grant from the Department of Defense to validate the effectiveness of a substance use rehabilitation program offered concurrently with rehabilitation for traumatic brain injury. Shepherd Center also engages in ongoing efforts to complete multiple studies funded by partners, including the NIDILRR TBI Model System, John Templeton Foundation, Templeton Religion Trust, Moody Neurorehabilitation, Avalon Action Alliance, and Wounded Warrior Project. Shepherd staff published numerous peer-reviewed publications in research journals and offered presentations

at international and national conferences – all to improve the health, participation, and employment outcomes of the individuals we serve and their families.

► **Multiple Sclerosis Research:** MS research at Shepherd Center includes clinical and translational rehabilitation and wellness intervention trials. With funding from NIDILRR, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), and the National MS Society, and support from the Carlos family, our team conducts studies to understand better the effects of physical and behavioral rehabilitation and exercise interventions, focusing on people with MS with mobility challenges or barriers to accessing rehabilitation interventions. We share our findings with healthcare providers outside Shepherd Center so that people with MS worldwide can access the best care. In FY24, our researchers conducted four studies related to MS with more than 200 participants and have developed novel and innovative approaches to improve accessibility to our exceptional clinical care in the MS institute.

► **User Experience, Accessibility, and Usability Research:** Shepherd Center's accessibility user research team brings together technology, research, and disability. Through the Accessibility User Research Collective (AURC), researchers in assistive technology and accessibility at Shepherd Center help make technology, health, and consumer goods products and services more accessible and usable for people with all types of disabilities. Companies including Microsoft, LinkedIn, Samsung, Intel, Netflix, McDonald's, and Nike engage the AURC to understand the needs of Shepherd Center's patient population and the broader community of people with all types of disabilities. Shepherd Center's rehabilitation engineering and research expertise helps

connect the disability community with product teams at Fortune 1000 companies to understand user experiences, inform product development, and create a more inclusive world. The AURC network includes over 1,500 people with disabilities across the United States, hundreds of whom participate every year in usability and user experience studies designed and managed by Shepherd Center researchers and collaborators.

- **Industry-Sponsored Trials:** Shepherd Center participates in United States Food

& Drug Administration (FDA) regulated clinical trials sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, medical institutions, and federal agencies. These trials test the effectiveness and safety of new drugs, cell therapies, and medical devices while expanding scientific and medical knowledge to provide enhanced treatment options for the future for people with spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, MS, and other neurological conditions. In FY24, Shepherd Center had 17 active clinical trials with 412 participants. ▲

## SHARE Military Initiative at Shepherd Center Awarded Department of Defense Grant

Among military service members and veterans, mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) and substance use often occur together. Despite this, many rehabilitation programs for this population do not accept individuals with ongoing substance use, which limits their ability to receive care.

To address this issue, the United States Department of Defense (DOD) has awarded a nearly \$2 million grant to researchers at Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative.

The study builds upon the SHARE Access Project funded by the Arthur M. Blank Foundation and focused on reworking and supplementing existing programming to effectively provide mTBI rehabilitation for clients with substance use. The Integrated Care Model developed and tested for mTBI and substance use involves modifications to treatment, beginning at the first interactions with service members and veterans and continuing through the transition support program one year after discharge.

“Our ultimate project aim is to contribute to breaking down barriers to accessing mTBI care by demonstrating that service members and veterans with mTBI and substance use can complete and benefit from integrated interdisciplinary mTBI rehabilitation programs,” says Katherine McCauley, Ph.D., co-investigator and clinical psychologist at SHARE.

The four-year project will involve a clinical trial launching in February 2025 and several focus groups. The final piece will focus on disseminating the model to other mTBI rehabilitation programs for adoption.

“This project represents an important step in validating our approach to treating TBI and substance use and removing a barrier to accessing TBI care for this large, underserved, and at-risk group of veterans and service members,” says Russell Gore, M.D., principal investigator and medical director of SHARE. “Our hope is that this work will show that veterans and service members with substance use disorders can complete and benefit from TBI rehabilitation. This study has the potential to shift the current paradigm and improve access to TBI care.”



# NeuroRehabilitation Learning Institute (NRLI)

Best practices for providing extraordinary care to patients with complex neurological injuries or illnesses are continually evolving. Clinicians worldwide face challenges in staying current on these specialized topics.

Fortunately, Shepherd Center hosts the NeuroRehabilitation Learning Institute (NRLI), an online resource for high-quality, evidence-based education programs. The web-based learning management system hosts interdisciplinary professional education programs providing continuing education credits to healthcare professionals. Providers who access the courses learn from our expert physicians, neuropsychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, recreational therapists, dietitians, nurses, and nurse practitioners.

#### **During FY24, over 10,000 active learners:**

- ▶ Enrolled in nearly 8,300 educational courses
- ▶ Achieved a completion rate of 54.5%
- ▶ From 37 nations, all 50 states and two U.S. territories

#### **In FY24, we offered:**

- ▶ 120 educational events = 140 hours of content
- ▶ 45 new live courses
- ▶ 75 online courses
- ▶ Awarded over 7,400 hours of continuing education for medical licensure

#### **In FY24, NRLI achieved:**

- ▶ Over 21% growth in active learners
- ▶ 26% growth in international learners
- ▶ 49% growth in educational offerings
- ▶ More than 17% growth in enrollments

#### **In FY24, popular courses included:**

- ▶ Medical Management of Brain Injury in the Trauma Setting
- ▶ Behavior Management with Inpatient ABI Populations
- ▶ Assessment Tools for Early Stages of Recovery after Severe Brain Injury
- ▶ Ethical Considerations in Rehabilitation
- ▶ Addressing Sexuality and Intimacy in Brain Injury Rehabilitation ▲

# Injury Prevention Program

Since its inception, Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program has spearheaded research, programming, and interventions to address injuries related to falls, distracted driving, diving, and other risky behaviors. A leader within the injury prevention community, Shepherd Center partners with community and government organizations to develop interventions, programs, and policies that encourage safe behaviors and reduce the number of spinal cord and brain injuries. In FY24, Shepherd Center's injury prevention efforts included:

**Shepherd Center Received Grant to Make Rural Roads Safer:** According to The Governor's Highway Safety Association, 45% of all fatal crashes happen on rural roads, and the risk of dying is 62% higher on a rural road than on urban roads for the same length of trip. Together, Shepherd Center's Injury Prevention Program and Montana State University Center for Health and Safety Culture have worked to make rural roads a safer place to travel. Through the Safe System Approach to Rural Roads grant, awarded by the Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety (GOHS), the two organizations have focused on increasing seat belt compliance using a social norming campaign targeting rural Georgians. The funds provided by Georgia to GOHS were provided by the National Highway Traffic Administration. The highway safety grant, totaling \$237,300, began on October 1, 2023.

**Sharing the Word to Buckle Up:** In January 2022, on his way home from work managing an Atlanta restaurant, Yusef swerved to avoid an object in the road. He then overcorrected and crashed,

sustaining a traumatic brain injury (TBI). Yusef spent a few weeks at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta before transferring to Shepherd Center for rehabilitation. Yusef says the reason he's here today is because of his seatbelt. In fall 2023, having made significant strides in his recovery, Yusef and his father, Will, were featured in a public service announcement (PSA) for the Buckle Up Georgia campaign. Georgia Public Broadcasting and the Governor's Office of Highway Safety produced the PSA in collaboration with Shepherd Center.



You can view the PSA  
on YouTube:



**Preventing Falls:** Shepherd Center once again participated in Falls Free Fridays in September, hosted by the Georgia Falls Prevention Coalition. The weekly events, including music therapy, Tai Chi, and educational sessions, aimed to raise awareness on how to prevent falls, which are one of the leading causes of spinal cord and brain injuries. ▲



# Quality and Outcomes Management

At Shepherd Center, we believe that extraordinary care leads to extraordinary outcomes. And with extraordinary outcomes, our patients build their new beginnings. We aim to lead in defining, measuring, and delivering the highest quality care. We constantly improve processes and the clinical care experience to provide the safest and most effective care possible.

Because we believe our patients, their families, our staff, and those who support us deserve the information they need to decide where they receive their care, work, and donate their time and talent, we are transparent in reporting our outcomes. To become the best, we must know where we have room to improve.

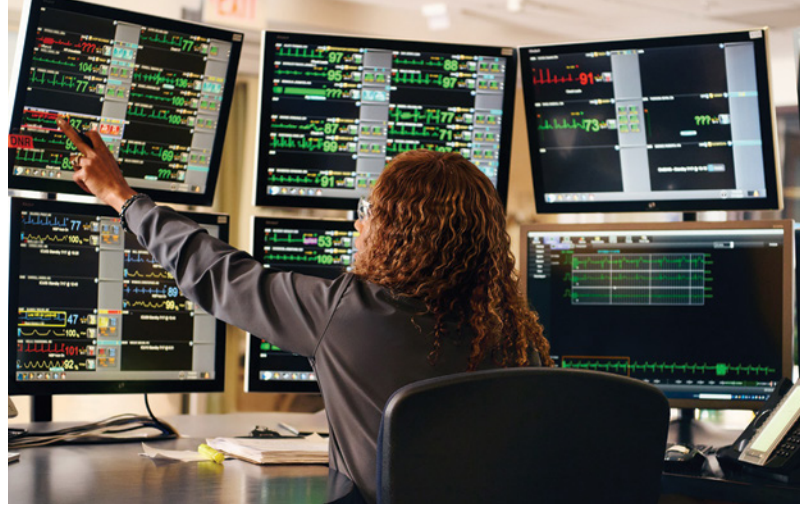
# Quality Metrics

## Harms

When patients must spend time in the hospital, they do not expect to be harmed. But like at any hospital, there are patients at Shepherd Center who experience infections, falls, or other harms during their rehabilitation journey. Shepherd Center's robust Quality and Outcomes Management program measures, evaluates, and reduces these harms through three of our clinical workgroups: Infection Prevention Workgroup, Fall Prevention and Restraints Workgroup, and the Wound Prevention Workgroup. Our measurement of harms includes:

- ▶ **Hospital-Acquired Conditions:** In FY24, there were 85 harms from infections and falls, an increase of 27% from FY23.
- ▶ **Pressure Injuries:** Many Shepherd Center patients are at risk for developing pressure injuries due to motor and sensory impairments, immobility, and changes in the skin. Our Wound Prevention Workgroup aims to work safe skincare practices into our culture to prevent and reduce the recurrence of pressure injuries. **In FY24, we reduced pressure injuries by 24%, from 71 in FY23 to 54 in FY24.**

**In FY24, there were 139 total harms, an increase of 0.7% from FY23.**



## Rehospitalization

Rehospitalization is another outcome that indicates the quality of care at a hospital. Through family training, transition support, and life skills programming, we work to keep our patients from returning to the hospital once they leave Shepherd Center. Our Quality and Outcomes team captures patient rehospitalizations within 30 days of discharge through patient phone survey response data. This self-reporting method for collecting the data allows us to capture all patients discharged to a community setting, not just the typical readmission metric, which pertains exclusively to the Medicare and Medicaid population. This allows us to identify the cause of each rehospitalization and better prepare our patients to return home without requiring additional inpatient care. **In FY24, only 1 in 10 patients needed rehospitalization for any reason within 30 days of discharge from Shepherd Center. This very low rate results from Shepherd's focus on patient and family training and transition support.\* ▲**

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For more information on our outcomes, please visit [shepherd.org/outcomes](https://shepherd.org/outcomes).

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Data Source: Uniform Data System for Medical Rehabilitation (UDS) and Epic

## Shepherd Center Wins Statewide Patient Safety Awards

*Award-winning project aims to improve care for patients with dysphagia.*

The Georgia Hospital Association presented its prestigious Patient Safety and Quality Award to Shepherd Center in Atlanta for its project that improved patient safety. The project “Shaken or Stirred? - A Multidisciplinary Process Improvement to Ensure Patients Receive Compliant-Thickened Liquids,” won first place in the Specialty Hospitals category.

“After someone has had a stroke, brain injury, or has been on a ventilator, they might have trouble swallowing, a condition which is called dysphagia. Our speech-language pathologists (SLP) and physicians suggest changes to the consistency of liquids by prescribing gel thickener packets that can make swallowing easier and safer for each patient,” says Jill Newsome, RD, LD, clinical nutrition manager at Shepherd Center, who led the project.

Newsome and her team discovered that knowledge gaps and process breakdowns existed across multiple disciplines regarding ordering, storing, accessing, and ensuring patients receive compliant liquids during mealtimes. There also was a lack of automatic triggers and visual cues to address potential defects.

To address these challenges, Meena Iyer, MSIE, LSSBB, CPHQ, manager of quality and outcomes management at Shepherd Center, facilitated a project to enhance the entire process of ordering and administering compliant liquids. Newsome initiated the project using the FOCUS Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) as part of the newly started Quality Improvement Champions Program (QICP). The team understood the end-to-end process while identifying gaps and causes of defects.

“Apart from streamlining the process and strengthening education, several visual cues were also implemented as a solution to ensure that patients are receiving compliant liquids during mealtimes and beyond,” Newsome says. “With this structure and process measures in place, we have seen zero incidences of patients receiving non-compliant liquids in the past six months.”

Shepherd Center was also presented with a Circle of Excellence Award, an honor given to hospitals and health systems that have demonstrated a sustained commitment to quality and patient safety as evidenced by not only winning a patient safety award in 2023, but also by earning three or more PHA Patient Safety Awards within the previous five years.



# Shepherd Center Foundation

Dear Friends,

Years ago, when we began planning Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center, both our goals and 2025 – the year many of our campaign goals will come to fruition – seemed very far in the distance. Yet, here we are on the cusp of 2025 with both the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences and the Marcus Center for Advanced Innovation topped out, the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences open for families, and the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation set to open in spring 2025. These two new buildings, along with renovation of existing spaces and growth in many of our programs, will vastly improve the patient and family experience and expand access to Shepherd Center’s much-needed specialty care.

While we have spent much of the past year preparing for Shepherd Center’s future, we have also found success in the present. Through our unique donor-funded programs, such as recreation therapy, animal-assisted therapy, and peer support, we have given thousands of patients and their families the tools they want and need to rebuild their lives after injury or illness.

Whether attending one of our events, giving to support one of our patient-centered initiatives, or volunteering to help serve our patients, families, and staff, our community has shown up in every way possible to support Shepherd Center. Thank you for your continued trust in us and support in helping us continue providing our trademark extraordinary care and achieving industry-leading outcomes.

Please enjoy our tribute to FY24 in the pages ahead. We look forward to continuing to grow together for generations to come.

With Appreciation,

Sarah L. Batts, MBA  
Senior Vice President, Advancement  
Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation





▲ Former Shepherd Center CEO Sarah Morrison, PT, MBA, MHA, David Apple, M.D., medical emeritus and co-founder of Shepherd Center, Alana Shepherd, co-founder of Shepherd Center, and Jamie Shepherd, MBA, MHA, FACHE, celebrate the opening of the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences.



Shepherd Center



Pursuing Possible  
The Campaign for Shepherd Center

## Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center

In FY24, Shepherd Center continued the most ambitious campaign in our 49-year history, celebrating occasions such as the topping off of the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences on Oct. 11, 2023. The celebratory event was the first of many that marked both construction and campaign milestones. The \$400 million campaign will fund capital and programmatic projects to benefit patients and families experiencing the most complex conditions, including spinal cord and brain injuries, multi-trauma, traumatic amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and pain. Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center is slated to continue through March 2026.

Anchored by generous grants from The Marcus Foundation and the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, Pursuing Possible: The Campaign for Shepherd Center focuses on two main initiatives: increasing patient access and improving the patient and family experience.

### Making Room for More: Increasing Patient Access

**To satisfy unmet patient demand, Shepherd Center will:**

- Expand inpatient capacity and convert all patient rooms to private ones with smart home technology.
- Increase capacity for day programs and outpatient services.
- Centralize and expand the Andrew C. Carlos Multiple Sclerosis Institute.

## Pushing for the Best Outcomes

To remain the world's premier rehabilitation destination and ensure that every patient and family experience delivers the best possible outcome, we will:

- Increase the family housing capacity to accommodate the entire length of stay by building the Arthur M. Blank Family Residences, opened in late 2024.
- Expand our innovation program by launching the new, dedicated Innovation Institute within the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation, opening in 2025.
- Grow the current fellowship program into the Institute of Higher Learning to educate the next generation of experts.
- Sustain and expand donor-funded programs, many of which are not reimbursed by insurance, such as recreation therapy, SHARE Military Initiative, Patient Assistance Fund, adaptive sports, and animal-assisted therapy, among others. ▲



▲ The Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation, currently under construction

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To learn more, visit [ExpandingShepherd.org](https://ExpandingShepherd.org).

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▲ The Arthur M. Blank Family Residences



▲ The James H. Shepherd bridge connecting the in-progress Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation to Shepherd Center's existing building

## The Legendary Party ▼

Chaired by Anne and Andrew Worrell, the 2023 Legendary Party, themed “Nostalgia of Discovery,” raised \$4.4 million, benefiting Shepherd Center’s Innovation Institute, a new, 30,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art space allowing Shepherd Center to advance research and therapies for patients at Shepherd and worldwide. The Innovation Institute will be housed in the Marcus Center for Advanced Rehabilitation building on Shepherd’s main campus. More than 600 guests attended the festivities, including a diverse mix of long-time supporters and a new generation of champions. The Legendary Party honored Shepherd Center Board of Trustee member Elizabeth Allen and her late husband Carl Allen, their daughter Jessica, and her husband Justin Jones, who serves on Shepherd’s Board of Directors.

## Derby Day ►

Sipping on mint juleps, playing lawn games, bidding on exclusive auction items, and – of course – the Kentucky Derby – were just some of the highlights of Derby Day, held on May 6, 2023, at the Chastain Horse Park. All activities were held in the outdoor equestrian ring, and the venue was made more accessible by installing large access matting over the rough terrain and ramps where needed. Julie Shepherd was the chair of the event. 2023’s Derby Day grossed \$200,000 to support Shepherd Center’s Recreation Therapy Program. The largest program of its kind in the country, recreation therapists help people lead healthy and active lives as independently as possible through recreation activities, providing education, skill development, and community reintegration opportunities.





## Shepherd Center Cup

The echoes of laughter and the satisfying clinks of golf clubs meeting golf balls have finally settled after the 39th Shepherd Center Cup, held on September 18, 2023. Blue skies over Cherokee Country Club's sunlit fairways provided the ideal setting for a memorable day. The tournament, chaired by Paul Pilcher, raised more than \$180,000 to benefit Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program.

## Soque Slam

In its inaugural year in 2023, anglers traveled to the river for the Soque River Slam, an invitational fishing rodeo benefitting Shepherd Center. Ten teams of anglers, each with seven members, including one patient from Shepherd, enjoyed a day of fishing on the beautiful Soque River. Teams celebrated with lunch on the water, cash prizes, and bragging rights for the teams with the largest number of fish "clearly on the hook" and the largest brown trout. The event, held October 14, 2023, in Clarksville, Georgia, raised \$155,955 for Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program.

## Cornhole for a Cause

On Saturday, September 9, 2023, Shepherd Center's Junior Committee held its inaugural Cornhole Tournament at Monday Night Brewing in West Midtown. With more than 30 teams and 40 spectators, the afternoon was filled with cornhole, music, food, drinks, and of course, football! The tournament had a competitive division for advanced players and a social division. The \$14,000 raised at the event will benefit Shepherd Center's Recreation Therapy Program.

# Additional Initiatives

## Volunteer Services

Each year, hundreds of individuals, families, and companies lend their support by volunteering their time to Shepherd Center. For FY24, 192 volunteers completed 8,911 service hours, amounting to a dollar value of \$278,389.01.

## Women Shaping Shepherd

Since its inception 10 years ago, Women Shaping Shepherd, our women's philanthropy circle, has raised nearly \$1.5 million for various Shepherd Center annual needs. In FY24, Women Shaping Shepherd members raised just over \$260,000 and purchased a Zero G gait and balance system.

## ShepherdCares

Each September, Shepherd Center employees pull together to support a need within the hospital by contributing to ShepherdCares, the hospital's employee-giving initiative. This year's campaign, "Shepherd Center: The Final Frontier," supported innovation initiatives at Shepherd Center, including the Innovation Institute. Shepherd Center employees rose to the challenge, pledging an incredible \$204,412 in four weeks. That figure was 17% over the stated goal and enough to earn an additional \$30,000 challenge grant from a generous donor, bringing the total raised to \$234,412.

## Shepherd's Men ►

Comprised of active or retired service members and civilian volunteers, Shepherd's Men, co-founded by Travis Ellis and Troy Campbell, has raised awareness and funds for Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative since 2014. In FY24, Shepherd's Men continued to be stalwart supporters of SHARE, raising \$850,000 for the



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**In addition to our signature events, Shepherd Center benefits from many community events. These include the Shepherd's Men Clay Shoot and Auction, Shepherd's Men Murphy Music and Brews, and two golf tournaments. These events are coordinated through our Cause and Community Relations Team.**

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program through special events and fundraising activities. FY23 saw the hosting of the inaugural Murphy Music & Brews in Murphy, North Carolina. The two-day event included an auction, live acoustic performances, dozens of craft beers from Buck Bald and other local breweries, food trucks, and three live bands performing on a stage in the middle of the town. Also in April, Shepherd's Men and The Charlie Daniels Journey Home Project held a joint fundraising event featuring country music star Chris Young. The special evening was held at the home of long-time Shepherd supporters Kelly and Toby Regal.

On October 13, 2023, at the Beretta Shooting Grounds at Barnsley Resort in Adairsville, Georgia, supporters gathered for Shepherd's Men Invitational Clay Shoot, which included a day on the range followed by fellowship and a BBQ lunch catered by Duval Semi Trailers. The event raised more than \$165,000 to benefit Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative. For information about Shepherd's Men and their events, please visit [shepherdsmen.com](http://shepherdsmen.com).

## Pecans on Peachtree®

Pecans on Peachtree started in the most unassuming of ways – out of the trunk of a car. But it has grown into a powerhouse, raising more than \$160,000 in FY23 through the holiday sale of pecans, which can be purchased raw, salted, candied, or even covered in chocolate.

## RPM 9/11 ▼

On September 9, 2023, the 12th annual RPM 9/11 5K took place at Atlanta's Chastain Park, with nearly 800 people participating. The event raised over \$200,000 for Shepherd Center's SHARE Military Initiative. The race is held each year in honor and memory of Ryan P. Means, a member of the U.S. Army's Special Forces Unit who passed away in 2009 following a deployment in Iraq. Ryan's family hosts the 5K race, and for the last several years, all the proceeds have gone to SHARE. ▲

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**For more information on Shepherd Center Foundation or to give, visit [foundation.shepherd.org](http://foundation.shepherd.org)**

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RPM 9/11



# Culture

When Shepherd employees join Shepherd Center, they embark on a journey of growth – building their careers, expanding their knowledge, and forming their community of colleagues. They often find their people, their families, and the place they truly belong. While some of our staff have been here for decades, others are just starting their careers. We're committed to growing together as we help our patients and their families begin again after injury or illness, and we aim to make every employee feel seen and valued.

In FY24, we did this by:

- ▶ **Providing an Inclusive Workplace:** Shepherd Center was once again named a “Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion” by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and Disability:IN. Shepherd Center is a top scorer, having earned a score of 100 out of a possible 100 on the Disability Equality Index® (DEI), the world’s most comprehensive benchmarking tool for Fortune 1000 scope companies to measure disability workplace inclusion inside their organization and to assess performance across industry sectors. This means that Shepherd Center invests time and resources to build inclusive programs and policies across culture and leadership, enterprise-wide access, employment practices (e.g., benefits, recruitment, employment, education, retention and



advancement, and accommodations), community engagement, and supplier diversity.

- ▶ **Strengthening our Efforts Around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA):** In FY24, Shepherd Center continued its commitment to creating a Shepherd Center that represents the diversity of the communities we serve and fosters a more diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive culture for our patients and staff. We formed four subcommittees of our DEIA Council, including Community Outreach, Staff Recruitment, Development & Engagement, Advocacy and Accessibility, and Patient and Family. Each sub-committee is led by two staff members and advised by a member of Shepherd Center’s senior management team. The committees aim to align DEIA objectives with Shepherd Center’s strategic goals, increase employee engagement in DEIA initiatives, and improve communication and awareness of DEIA opportunities.

While we recognize our efforts are far from complete, a few FY24 highlights include:

- Shepherd Center's DEIA Council, with the help of volunteers, hosted nine events and celebrations, including those for Black History Month, Lunar New Year, Global Accessibility Day, Pride Month, Juneteenth, Disability Awareness Month, the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Hispanic Heritage Month, and Veterans Day.
- Shepherd Center added three benefit offerings: NorthStar Financial, Carrot Fertility, and Employer-Assisted Housing Program.
- Employees were given five new voluntary courses in Workday – Creating Inclusive Workplaces, Inclusive Language, Microaggressions and Subtle Acts of Exclusion, Unconscious Bias, and Unconscious Bias – Manager Edition.
- Shepherd Center participated in Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School's Corporate Work Study Program. In this program, students are matched with organizations to learn valuable skills, gain job experience, and prepare for life after graduation. Shepherd Center hosted four students to give them knowledge and experience in the healthcare field.
- Shepherd Center continues to use recruiting practices to build upon a diverse pipeline of candidates through partnerships in the community and targeted outreach activities. Shepherd partners with over 20 schools and universities in Georgia to host students for externships and clinical rotations, encouraging these individuals to choose Shepherd as their employer upon graduation. Shepherd's recruiting

team also targeted outreach activities through partnerships with organizations such as diversitynursing.com, Veterans Employment Center, Abilities in Jobs, Seniors in Jobs, and LGBTQ in Jobs, among others.

- **Topping the Rankings:** In FY24, Shepherd Center was again recognized among the Best Hospitals for Rehabilitation by U.S. News. Since 2008, Shepherd Center has ranked among the top rehabilitation hospitals in the United States, a testament to the consistent high-quality care our team provides to ensure patients and their families achieve the best outcomes possible.
- **Serving our Community:** ShepherdServes is the brainchild of Sarah Morrison, PT, MBA, MHA, Shepherd Center's former CEO. She wanted to create an opportunity for Shepherd Center employees to give back to the community that has supported the hospital for 49 years. In FY24, 36 employees offered their time on weekends, totaling 86 hours on weekends to volunteer at Helping Mamas, the Atlanta Pride Run, and an Earth Day cleanup on the Atlanta Beltline. ▲

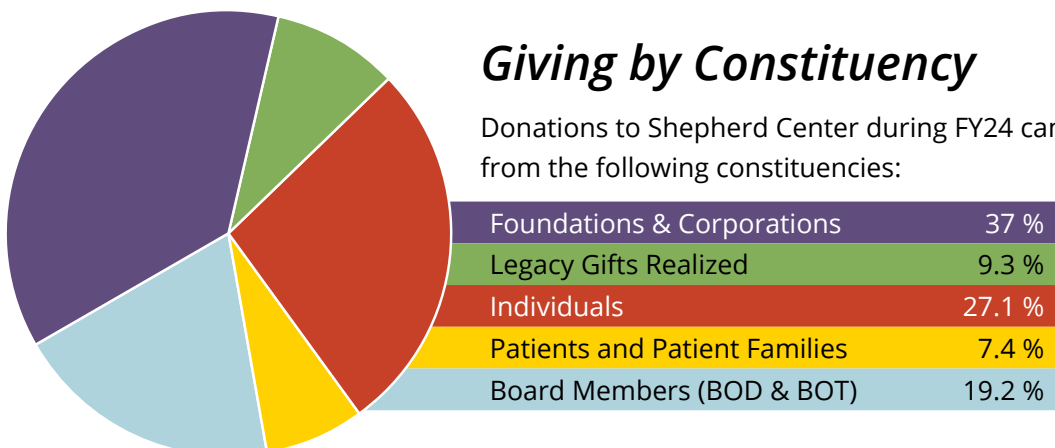
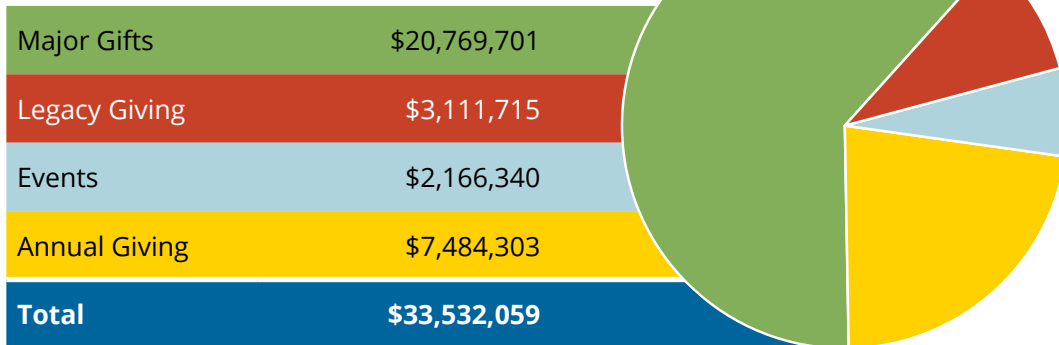




# FY24 Financials

Shepherd Center is a not-for-profit hospital that relies on philanthropic support from individuals, families, corporations, and foundations. Donations help fund patient care programs, patient equipment, family housing, special and capital projects, technology, and educational programs. To learn how to contribute in various ways, visit the Shepherd Center Foundation online at [foundation.shepherd.org](https://foundation.shepherd.org).

## Shepherd Center Foundation Fundraising Total for FY24





# Hospital Financials

## Financial Summary and Operating Statement For Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 2024

### *Statement of Revenues and Expenses*

Patient services revenue	\$ 272,104,390
Other Revenue	\$ 39,207,426
Investment Income	\$ 10,458,063
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 321,769,879</b>
Less: Operating Expenses	\$ 309,265,188
Provision for improvements, equipment and new services	\$ 12,504,691

### *Charitable Services Rendered (at cost)*

Uncompensated care (patients without funding)	\$ 5,086,900
Undercompensated care (underfunded government programs)	\$ 22,182,865

### *Donated Property and Equipment*

Donations of property and equipment	\$ 123,696
Donations used to purchase property and equipment	\$ 101,523,297
<b>Total Donated property and equipment</b>	<b>\$ 101,646,993</b>

# Board Of Directors

**through March 31, 2024**

## Officers

Alana Shepherd (1975), Chairman  
*Shepherd Center Founding Member*

James D. Thompson (2000), Chair Elect  
*Retired President*  
*ING Life of Georgia*

Clark H. Dean, (2010), Chair Elect  
*Executive Managing Director and Partner*  
*Transwestern*

Sara S. Chapman (1993), Corporate Secretary  
*Teacher*  
*The Westminster Schools*

Juli Owens (2017), Recording Secretary  
*Realtor*  
*Atlanta Fine Homes Sotheby's International Realty*

## Ex-Officio

Sarah Morrison, PT, MBA, MHA (2017)\*  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Shepherd Center*

Steve Holleman (2020), Treasurer\*\*  
*Chief Financial Officer*  
*Shepherd Center*

Michael R. Yochelson, M.D., MBA (2017)  
*Chief Medical Officer*  
*Shepherd Center*

\* retired in September 2024

\*\* retired in July 2024

## Membership

Andrew Alias (2022)  
*Chairman, Board of Trustees*  
*REPAY*

Fred V. Alias (1984, rejoined 2008)  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Sandcastle Resorts, Inc.*

Shaler Alias (2020)  
*President and Co-Founder*  
*REPAY*

David F. Apple, Jr., M.D. (1975)  
*Medical Director Emeritus*  
*Shepherd Center Founding Member*

Cyndae Arrendale (2016)  
*Civic Volunteer*

Bryant G. Coats (2017)  
*Chief Executive Officer and Director*  
*Resource Housing Group, Inc.*

Robert Cunningham (2020)  
*Retired Owner*  
*Cunningham Associates*

Charles L. Davidson III (2016)  
*Chairman/CEO*  
*The Brookdale Group*

John S. Dryman (1987)  
*President*  
*The Dryman Team*

General Larry R. Ellis, USA (Ret.) (2017)  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*ESSE, LLC*

William C. Fowler (1993)  
*Private Investor*

Susan Hawkins (2022)  
*Civic Volunteer*

Justin Jones (2020)  
*Vice President, International  
Heritage Plastics*

Molly Lanier (2014)  
*Civic Volunteer*

Donald P. Leslie, M.D. (1992)  
*Medical Director Emeritus  
Shepherd Center*

Douglas Lindauer (2010)  
*Vice President Sales and Marketing  
Ted Turner Expeditions*

Talbot Nunnally (1997)  
*Shareholder  
Chamberlain, Hrdlicka, White, Williams & Aughtry*

Sally D. Nunnally (1991)  
*Civic Volunteer*

Vincenzo Piscopo (2020)  
*President and Chief Executive Officer  
United Spinal Association*

John Rooker (2014)  
*Chief Executive Officer  
Rooker Company*

James H. Shepherd, III (2014)  
*President and Chief Operating Officer  
Shepherd Center*

W. Clyde Shepherd III (2005)  
*Vice President  
Shepherd Construction Co.*

K. Boynton Smith (2017)  
*Senior Vice President  
McGriff, Seibels & Williams*

James E. Stephenson (2008)  
*Retired Chairman  
Yancey Bros. Co.*

Jarrad Turner (2020)  
*Chief Executive Officer/Co-Founder  
9P Solutions*

## **Senior Executive Team at Shepherd Center FY24**

Sarah Batts  
*Senior Vice President, Advancement  
Executive Director, Shepherd Center Foundation*

Deborah Backus  
*Vice President, Research and Innovation  
Director, Crawford Research Institute*

Wilma Bunch  
*Vice President, Patient Experience*

Katherine Creek  
*Vice President, Human Resources*

Tiffany LeCroy  
*Chief Nursing Officer*

Joe Nowicki  
*Vice President, Facilities Services*



With five decades of experience, Shepherd Center provides world-class clinical care, research, and family support for people experiencing the most complex conditions, including spinal cord and brain injuries, multi-trauma, traumatic amputations, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and pain. An elite center ranked by U.S. News 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.



**Shepherd Center**

2020 Peachtree Road NW | Atlanta, GA 30309 | [shepherd.org](http://shepherd.org)