



## Empowering those living with spinal cord injuries/disorders.

For the healthcare professionals at MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital, it's about more than just treating patients. It's about providing amazing, individualized care that helps people achieve their maximum level of function and independence, essentially living up to our credo, "adding life to years."

Their efforts to empower those living with spinal cord injuries/disorders (SCI/D) epitomize this dedication.

As a sponsor of the United Spinal Association of Metropolitan Washington, MedStar NRH has played a key role in improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis due to SCI/D. In fact, half of the chapter's board members are from MedStar NRH. "We work side by side with board members from the SCI/D community to make a positive impact through advocacy, running a monthly peer support group, and providing access to wellness and fitness programs," explains Harsh Thakkar, immediate past president of the chapter and a SCI/D peer wellness coordinator at MedStar NRH.

When the pandemic arrived, a COVID-19 Emergency Relief program was established with \$15,000 in funding from the United Spinal Association and the Craig H. Neilson Foundation to provide grants to individuals with SCI/D in need of support. More than 200 individuals from three independent living centers, as well as MedStar NRH SCI/D patients and chapter members, were able to purchase necessities, medications, and medical supplies, including personal protective equipment.

### Letter from the president.

At MedStar National Rehabilitation Network, we are dedicated to helping individuals with disabling illnesses or injuries throughout their recovery journeys and beyond. We work hard to help our patients thrive, not only under our care, but out in the community, too.

For individuals living with spinal cord injuries/disorders (SCI/D), the challenges can sometimes feel particularly overwhelming. But, as you'll read in this report, we are fortunate to be able to address this community's needs in many unique ways. To our partners we say thank you. We couldn't do it without your support.

Sincerely,

John D. Rockwood  
Senior Vice President,  
MedStar Health  
President, MedStar  
National Rehabilitation Network



Meanwhile, Suzanne Groah, MD, MSPH, chief of the Paralysis Rehabilitation and Recovery program at MedStar NRH, and director of spinal cord injury research, led the charge to address the information needs of primary care providers (PCPs) caring for individuals with SCI/D.

“There is considerable uncertainty among PCPs about how to provide SCI/D patients with an optimal standard of care due to limited experience with this population,” says Dr. Groah. “This information gap has existed for many years—and it’s a gap we are trying to fill.”



In partnership with the American Spinal Injury Association, the Academy for Spinal Cord Injury Professionals, and her colleagues at MedStar NRH, Dr. Groah’s team has, to date, researched and produced 19 journal articles, which have been published in English and Spanish in Topics in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation. The articles, also accessible by patients, have been extremely well-received and are now used locally and worldwide.

“There is considerable uncertainty among PCPs about how to provide SCI/D patients with an optimal standard of care due to limited experience with this population.”  
–Suzanne Groah, MD, MSPH

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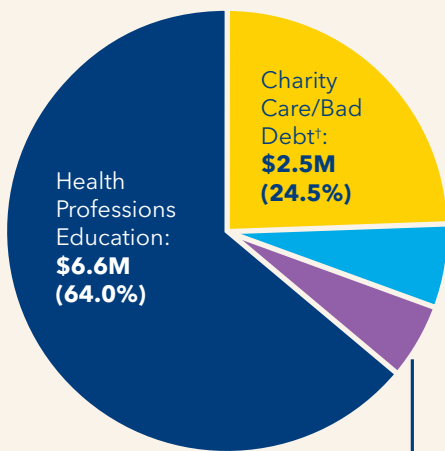
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## Community benefit contribution 2020: \$9.3M

\*Includes subsidies, community health improvement services, community building activities, financial contributions, and community benefit operations  
†Includes unfunded government-sponsored programs

Community Services\*:  
**\$0.6M (6.2%)**

Research:  
**\$0.5M (5.3%)**

## It’s how we treat people.