



# Spinal Connection

## Spinal Connection

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Spinal Connection is published quarterly by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission.

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Spinal Connection is an official publication of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission. The Commission was established by Act 311 of 1975. On July 1, 2019, the Commission became a public health program under the Arkansas Department of Health as initiated by the Transformation and Efficiencies Act of 2019 (Act 910).

## From the Director ~ Terra Patrom

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### Let's Talk About Change

This is not the first time I've mentioned 'change' in an article. Change is STILL hard and STILL takes time to get used to overall.

Recently, we made and received Commissioner approval to implement new and updated changes to our Agency Case Management Procedures Manual that became effective on July 1, 2023. This allowed us to implement a new financial scale with amended **Normal Living Requirements**. The last time this scale was amended was in 2012. It now has updated NET income levels compatible to 2022 scales. Why 2022? It's because finalized 2023 scales were not out when these changes were drafted and brought forth to the Commissioners.

Additional changes were made to clarify the procedures for assistance with purchasing spinal cord related items. With that, we also had to look at how far the level of technology has come in the last 10 years since the Manual was last revamped. This required us to revisit our **Exclusions** list. Ultimately, our procedures require us to review and ensure the most cost-effective items of need (medical) are determined. As has always been the case, we must ensure ALL other

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Send your donation to:

AR Spinal Cord Commission  
5800 W 10th St.  
Suite 108  
Little Rock, AR 72204

## Trauma Rehab Call Center

1-855-767-6983  
(FREE 24/7 Access)

Help & Information  
for Arkansans with Spinal  
Cord Injury & Healthcare  
Providers

## Call or Text 9-8-8

The national suicide and mental health crisis lifeline is live.

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resources are utilized first and foremost before expending any agency funds. Basically, this means if your insurance covers it, we must go through your insurance first, even if it takes a while to get the item. We cannot circumvent this process to expedite your request.

This is one of the reasons we maintain a pool of loaner equipment at our various Regional Loan Closets. It helps us get you through the insurance prior approval processes. Is the loaner equipment fitted to you and perfect for your everyday needs? Absolutely not. This is a pool of equipment to help keep you mobile and active (from point A to Point B) while waiting on your insurance.

Lastly, the BIG change for many of you. Yes... it's caseload **REZONING** time. Fundamentally, it's inevitable this will happen about every 4-5 years. Last time we rezoned case manager coverage areas was in Fall of 2019. Here we are 4 years later with another rezoning. This rezoning goes into effect November 1, 2023. This rezoning covers all areas of the State **except** the River Valley area going North through our NW Arkansas coverage areas. Though some of you in the rezoned area may have the same Case Manager, please keep in mind your Case Manager will have NEW areas with clients they need to meet.

That's all the updated changes for now. Any questions, reach out to us via email at [ascc@arkansas.gov](mailto:ascc@arkansas.gov) and check out our Facebook page for the latest news and information!

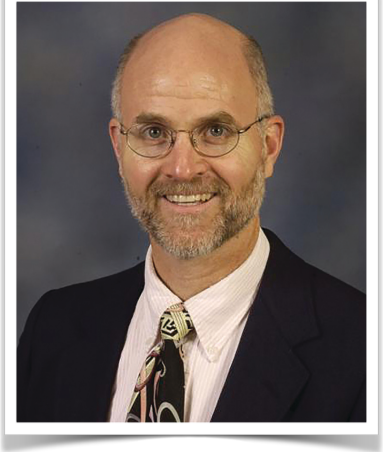
Find us on 

[fb.me/arspinalcord](https://fb.me/arspinalcord)



### It is Vaccine Time Again

The time to prepare for the winter season and the risk of infections is upon us. In years past, the focus was on an annual Influenza vaccine, but that has expanded recently to include COVID for all age groups, Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and the Herpes Zoster (Shingles) for older age groups. The tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) vaccine has been around for a long time and is recommended for all ages. The pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for those with poor immune response and for the elderly. These vaccines are important not only for your health, but to avoid secondary complications and sick time that increases your risk of other problems such as pressure sores and debility that can arise with illness and bed rest.



Thomas Kiser, MD

The influenza vaccine is now available in drug stores and doctor's offices. The best time to get this vaccine is in late September or October so the immune response to the influenza vaccine will be most potent during the peak influenza season of December to February.

COVID cases and hospitalizations are again increasing. The present recommendation for all adults is to get an up-to-date COVID-19 vaccine. A new vaccine covering the most recent variant should be available in mid-September. For most people, their immunity to COVID infection has waned, and the next COVID booster will restore that immunity – helping to prevent the risk of hospitalization and death. Vaccination can also help to protect against long COVID, which can follow even mild COVID cases.

The new viral kid on the street is the Respiratory syncytial virus, RSV. Actually, it has long been a problem for young children, but can also be dangerous for older adults. The federal government has approved the first RSV vaccine for people aged 60 and older. If you qualify, you should get this vaccine. RSV usually occurs earlier than influenza and you want to get this vaccine before November when the occurrence of RSV is expected to peak. Probably the vaccine will only be necessary every 2 years, although official guidance has yet to be released. Shingles is a painful rash that consists of blisters that typically scab over after 7 to 10 days and clear up in 2 to 4 weeks. The associated pain is described as an intense burning sensation and

can last for months or even years after the rash. The long-lasting pain is called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN), and it is the most common complication of shingles. Your risk of getting shingles and PHN increases as you get older, and it is recommended that anyone over 50 years of age get two doses of the shingles vaccine called Shingrix (recombinant zoster vaccine) to prevent shingles and complications from the disease.

Protection from diphtheria and tetanus and against whooping cough (pertussis) is achieved by getting the Tdap or Td vaccine. This vaccine is recommended for everyone regardless of age (the Td covers only tetanus and diphtheria and is for anyone allergic to the pertussis component of the vaccine). It should be updated every 10 years. I have just updated my immunization, and now I am in good shape for the next 10 years.

Pneumococcal pneumonia is very difficult to treat and recovery from it can be tenuous. With a spinal cord injury, your immune system is not as active or healthy as it was prior to your injury, so getting vaccinated is recommended even if you are younger than 65. Everyone over 65, regardless of immune status, is also advised to be vaccinated. There are several different pneumococcal vaccines available that cover different variants, so talk to your doctor about which of the vaccines are best for you.

The bottom line is that everyone should have an up-to-date Tdap or Td vaccine and should get the upcoming influenza vaccine and COVID vaccine by September or at the latest by October. Consider the RSV vaccine if > 60 years old, the pneumococcal vaccine if you have a spinal cord injury or are > 65 years old, and the shingles immunization if you are over 50 years old. Talk about these vaccinations with your physician, discuss risks versus benefits and possible contraindications, and set yourself up for a healthy winter and spring this year!

### **Our sincere condolences to the friends and family of...**

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Joseph L. Pullman 10/12/22  
Lisa S. Hash 11/11/22  
Sandra Beard 12/20/22  
Jerry C. Owen 12/21/22  
Henry W. McCamey 01/23/23  
Jason R. Kain 03/12/23  
Sarah L. Weatherly 03/23/23  
Carolyn F. Herrin 04/27/23  
Orville J. Ashley 05/01/23  
Eric Kral 05/02/23  
Frances Guerrero 05/20/23  
Vivian S. Doyle 05/24/23  
Gary H. McDonald 05/29/23  
Tony L. Petties 06/20/23  
Bobby Watson Jr. 06/25/23  
Michael Smith 07/07/23  
Lisa Naylor 07/10/23  
Juanita M. Melton 07/17/23  
Tina R. McKinney 07/18/23  
Lloyd E. Sloan 08/05/23  
Nona Threet 08/07/23  
Tommy Washington 08/13/23

## Rollin' Razorbacks 2023-24 Season

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The Arkansas Rollin' Razorbacks, a Division III team registered with the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA), is competing in the 2023-24 season.



Upcoming Tournament Dates (subject to change):

- ◆ Jan 12-14, 2024 Birmingham, AL
- ◆ Jan 26-28, 2024 Bowling Green, KY

More tournament dates will be announced in the future and will be posted to the Rollin' Razorbacks Facebook Group as well as the ASCC Facebook Page.

## Telecommunication Access Program (TAP)

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TAP provides specialized telecommunication equipment to eligible Arkansans who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or who have a speech, visual, **mobility**, or intellectual impairment. TAP strives to remove telecommunication barriers through the delivery of adaptive communication technology. Visit <https://arktap.org/> or call 501-686-9693 or 1-800-981-4463. Also, on Facebook, at <fb.me/arktap1>.



## Camp Aldersgate to Host Inaugural Adult Weekend Getaway in NW AR

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For the first time ever, Camp Aldersgate will be hitting the road to offer an adult retreat from **November 3-5**, at Mount Sequoyah, located in **Fayetteville**. The Methodist Foundation for Arkansas is funding the opportunity for adults with special needs, ages 19-55, to attend for free.



The retreat is **designed for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities**. Individuals who are interested in registering can sign up online. Spots are limited and will be granted on a first come, first served basis. The deadline to apply is October 20th.

Even though it will be off-site, many of the same traditional activities will be offered such as s'mores around the campfire, crafts and friendly cabin competition games. The curriculum will be developed by full-time Certified Therapeutic Recreational Specialists on Aldersgate's staff.

For more info, visit <https://campaldersgate.net/northwestarkcamp/>





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## Find us on

Don't forget to like and follow us on Facebook at [\*\*fb.me/arspinalcord\*\*](https://fb.me/arspinalcord)

We post and share relevant and current information, such as:

- ▶ Spinal Connection Newsletter
- ▶ Job Openings
- ▶ Upcoming Events
- ▶ Information Shared from Vendors
- ▶ Accessible Parking Laws
- ▶ Spinal Disorders Camp
- ▶ Grants, Scholarships, & Fundraisers
- ▶ ASCC Conferences
- ▶ Holiday Closures
- ▶ Support Group Meetings
- ▶ Voting Information
- ▶ Urgent Information