
ARKANSAS SPINAL CORD COMMISSION

FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Honorable Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor

Jimmy Ashley, Jonesboro, Chairman

LeDanté Walker, Hot Springs, Vice Chairman

Michael Cranford, Foreman

Patricia Knott, M.D., Conway

Vacant Position

Renee Mallory, RN, BSN, Secretary of Health

Jennifer Dillaha, MD, Director

Terra Patrom, CRC, Executive Director

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ascc.ar.gov



AGENCY HISTORY AND DIRECTION

Agency Mission

The mission of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission is to administer a statewide program to identify and meet the unique and lifelong needs of people with spinal cord disabilities in the state.

Scope of Services

Each year, nearly 200 Arkansans sustain spinal cord disabilities that are severe enough to limit their abilities to function in their homes, their jobs and their communities. For most of these individuals, the disability is permanent, causing limitations in their mobility, sensation and other functional abilities. These disabilities have a significant impact on the individuals, and their families and communities. The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission provides a variety of services to individuals with spinal cord disabilities and their families throughout the state of Arkansas. Sixteen Case Managers, located in offices around the state, provide services to Arkansans in all 75 counties. Services are tailored to the needs of the individual and family. The services are as diverse in scope as the individuals we serve. The Commission staff work in concert with state and federal agencies, medical and home health services, rehabilitation and educational institutions and community agencies to assist these individuals in accessing the services that they need. In addition, the Commission conducts educational programs and disseminates educational materials on spinal cord disabilities to help individuals, families and healthcare professionals understand the unique medical conditions and complications resulting from spinal cord disabilities.

The goal of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission is to ensure that all persons with spinal cord disabilities in our state are provided every opportunity to live as independently and productively as possible.



Legislative Mandates

The Arkansas Legislature established the Commission in 1975 to provide a coordinated approach to early identification, emergency care, acute and rehabilitation treatment and long term follow up. Within this system of care, the Commission provides a link between Arkansans with spinal cord disabilities and their families and the multifaceted system of treatment and services available to them.

ACT 311 of 1975 (ACA 20-8-201)

“It is declared and found that a major problem facing medicine and the public health and welfare is the absence of an adequate program to assist in the treatment and rehabilitation of persons suffering from congenital or acquired spinal cord dysfunction. [...] Therefore, to guarantee the best possible opportunity for minimizing the mortality, morbidity, and permanent disability of persons due to spinal cord injury or dysfunction, it is essential that the state develop a program to: [...] Authorize the development and operation of an Arkansas spinal cord treatment center and system which will integrate present treatment and rehabilitative capabilities and develop additional service capabilities as necessary to guarantee the availability of continuously current and evolving new processes in state-of-the-art treatment and rehabilitative services to all spinal cord disabled Arkansans; and provide for full coordination of treatment and rehabilitation efforts from problem recognition through progressive rehabilitation and for as long as a need for these specialized services shall exist.”

ACT 330 of 1977 (ACA 20-8-206)

“The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission shall establish and maintain a central registry of spinal cord disabled persons. Every public and private health and social agency and attending physician shall report to the commission within five (5) calendar days after identification of any spinal cord disabled person. However, the consent of the individual shall be obtained prior to making this report, except that every spinal cord disease or injury resulting in permanent partial, permanent total, or total disability shall be reported to the commission immediately upon identification.

The report shall contain the name, age, residence, and type of disability of the individual and such additional information as may be deemed necessary by the commission.

Within fifteen (15) days of the report and identification of a spinal cord disabled person, the commission shall notify the spinal cord disabled person or the most immediate family members of their right to assistance from the state, the services available, and the eligibility requirements.”

SERVICES AND INITIATIVES

Case Management Services

Coping with a spinal cord disability is difficult. The newly injured individual and their family face a multitude of questions and concerns about the disability and how it will affect their future. Every aspect of life is affected by the disability. The Case Manager helps the individual and the family find the information they need as well as providing personal and emotional support. Case Managers also assist families in identifying and applying for services to assure that they access every available resource. The Case Manager is also there long term for those individuals living in the community who need information, referral and assistance with obtaining referrals or equipment. This life long, community based intervention prevents costly hospital stays and institutionalizations.

In Fiscal Year 2023, 2,454 Arkansans with spinal cord disabilities received services from ASCC. Sixteen Case Managers and one Intake Coordinator made 4,365 contacts with clients, providing services to meet their unique needs.

Long Term Attendant Care

Arkansans who live with tetraplegia after spinal cord injury depend on caregivers for their daily living activities, like bathing, grooming, dressing, preparing and eating meals, and transportation. For these eligible spinal cord injured tetraplegics, ASCC provides a long term attendant care program allowing individuals to remain in the community with the assistance of a personal care provider who assists them with their basic needs for up to four hours a day. Designed to keep individuals out of nursing homes, this small but cost effective program served 8 clients in fiscal year 2023 at an average cost of \$15,207 per person - approximately 19.8% the cost of nursing home care¹. We started the year with 10 clients in the program; however, two clients sadly passed during FY23.

Regional Loan Closet Program

When a person who depends on a wheelchair for mobility has a flat tire or needs repairs, it renders them immobile. If their wheelchair cushion is damaged, it can cause costly pressure sores. Having access to equipment quickly is important. ASCC is able to recycle wheelchairs and other equipment for emergency uses. The ASCC Regional Loan Closets are storage facilities at/near our field offices. We store new and recycled durable medical equipment and supplies to allow Case Managers to provide loaner equipment to meet emergency needs. These are especially important in rural parts of the state where it may take weeks to get repairs made. Commonly used items such as therapeutic cushions, reachers, replacement wheelchair tires as well as wheelchairs and other durable medical equipment are stored and disseminated on a regular basis, saving money, time and medical complications, as well as keeping our clients mobile.

Spinal Disorders Camp

The Commission, in cooperation with Camp Aldersgate and MedCamps of Arkansas, sponsored an in-person camp experience July 24-29, 2022. Twenty-two campers from all over the state between the ages of 6 to 16 participated in many activities, including arts and crafts, nature activities, programs curated to their interests, and sports and recreation. All activities were designed to promote increased independence, networking, and build self-esteem. Spinal Disorders Camp is the only opportunity for many Campers to interact with other children who live with spina bifida and/or other congenital or acquired SCI/D.



SPINAL TREATMENT SERVICES

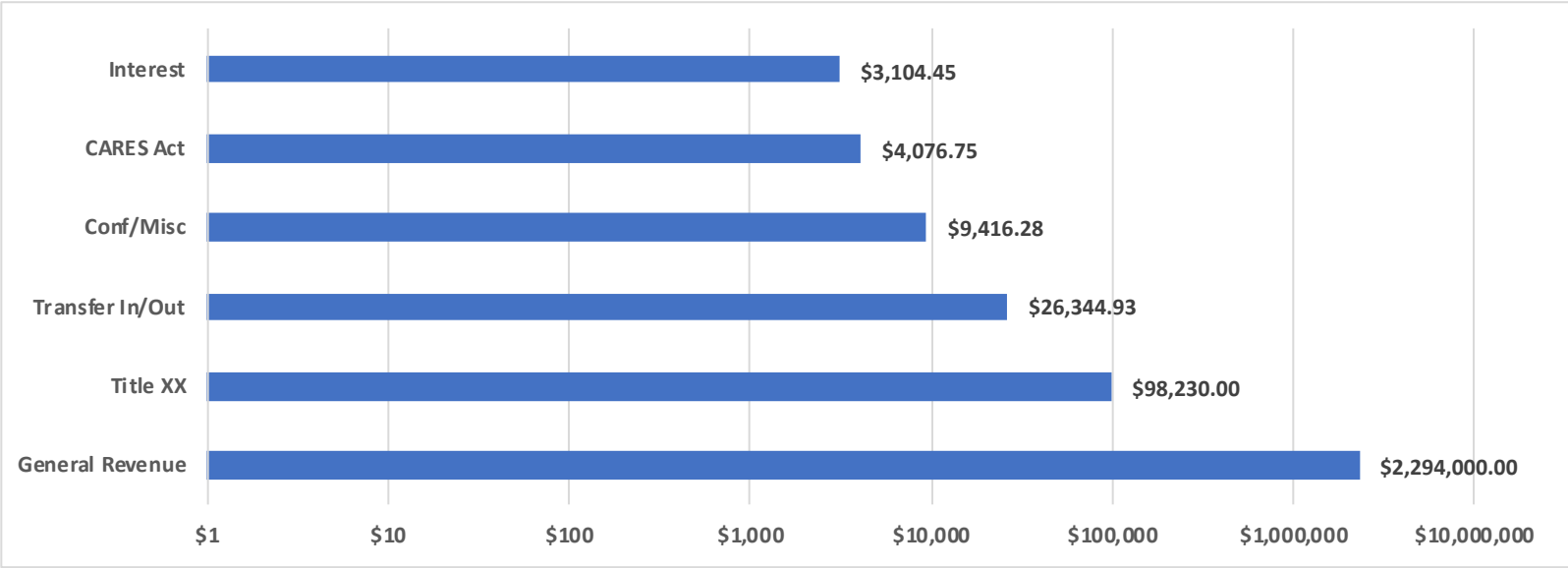
Spinal Cord Injuries are catastrophic and costly disabilities to both the individual and their family. The average lifetime costs vary according to the age at the time of the injury and severity of the injury, estimated to be between \$1,000,000 and \$6,000,000 dollars. For example, the estimated lifetime cost for a C-6 tetraplegic injured at age 25 would be \$4,264,990². Costs continue to rise each year creating emotional and financial hardships for the individual as well as their family. It is a devastating reality that causes each family to wonder who will provide the needed assistance. The goal of ASCC is to provide assistance to individuals with spinal cord disabilities who meet established medical and financial criteria. Purchases are authorized by ASCC Case Managers only after all similar benefits such as insurance coverage, have been exhausted.

Purchases authorized by ASCC include medically prescribed equipment such as wheelchairs, therapeutic cushions, emergency medical supplies, and bathroom equipment. In addition, the Commission assists with minor home modifications, wheelchair ramps, and vehicle hand controls.

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Commission expended \$547,963.62 for these essential goods and services. ASCC Case Managers leveraged \$498,469.06 in goods and services on behalf of our clients. Though the number of clients on the ASCC registry increases slightly each year, those who meet the financial eligibility criteria continues to increase at a greater rate.

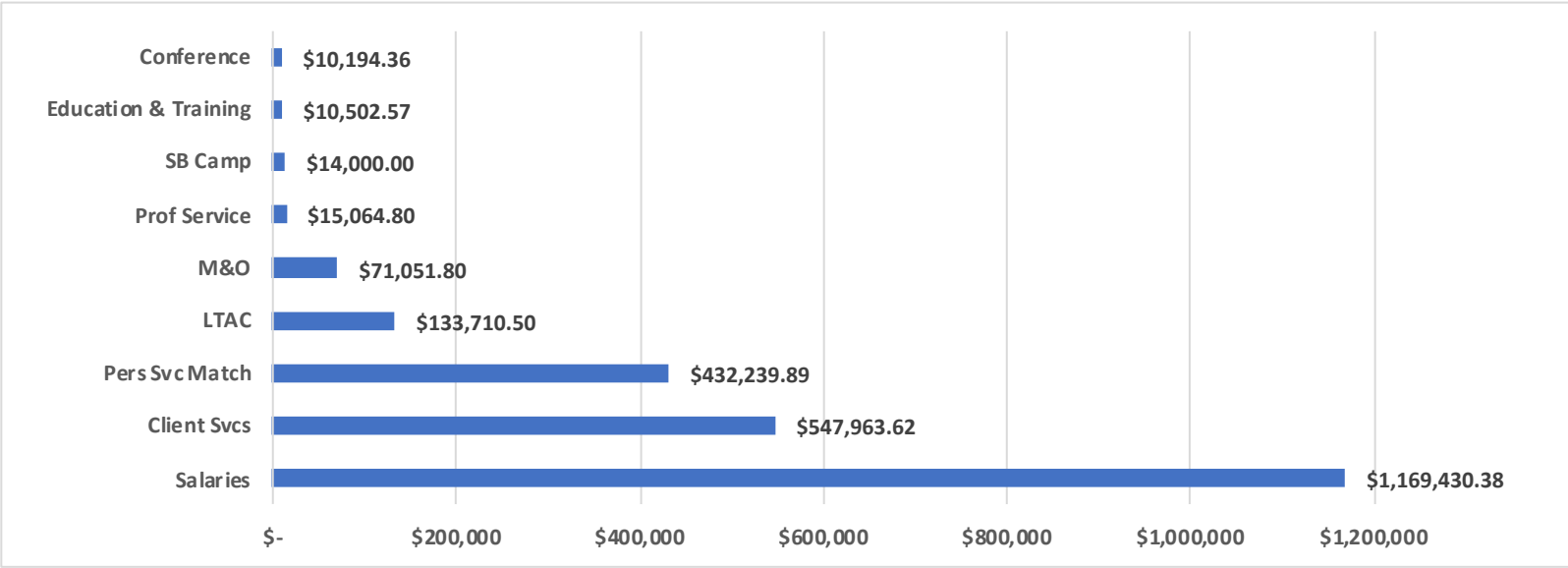
AGENCY FINANCIALS

Revenue (Total = \$2,435,172.41)



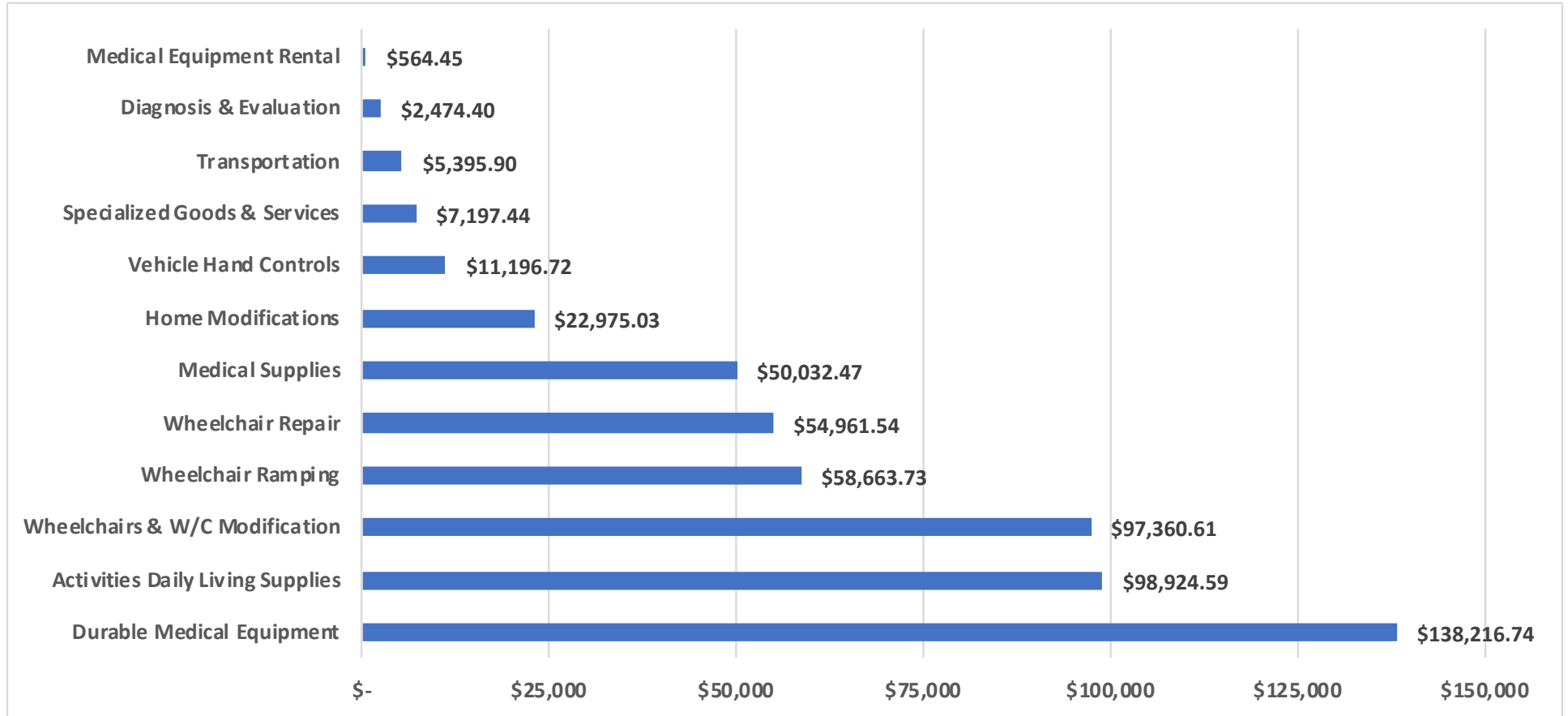
Note: The x-axis of the Revenue Chart (above) is displayed in a Base 10 Logarithmic Scale.

Expenditures (Total = \$2,404,157.92)



AGENCY FINANCIALS (CONT.)

Client Service Expenditures (Total = \$547,963.62)



AGENCY REFERRAL SERVICES

FY2023 New Cases by Etiology

TRAUMATIC (N=94)		
Cause	Count	Percent
Motor Vehicle	35	37.2%
Fall	33	35.1%
Violence (Intentional)	10	10.6%
Motorcycle	4	4.3%
Other Transport	2	2.1%
Hit by Object/Explosion	2	2.1%
Sports (Contact)	2	2.1%
ATV	1	1.1%
Pedestrian	1	1.1%
Diving	1	1.1%
Sports (Non-Contact)	1	1.1%
Vionlence (Unintentional)	1	1.1%
Medical/Surgical	1	1.1%

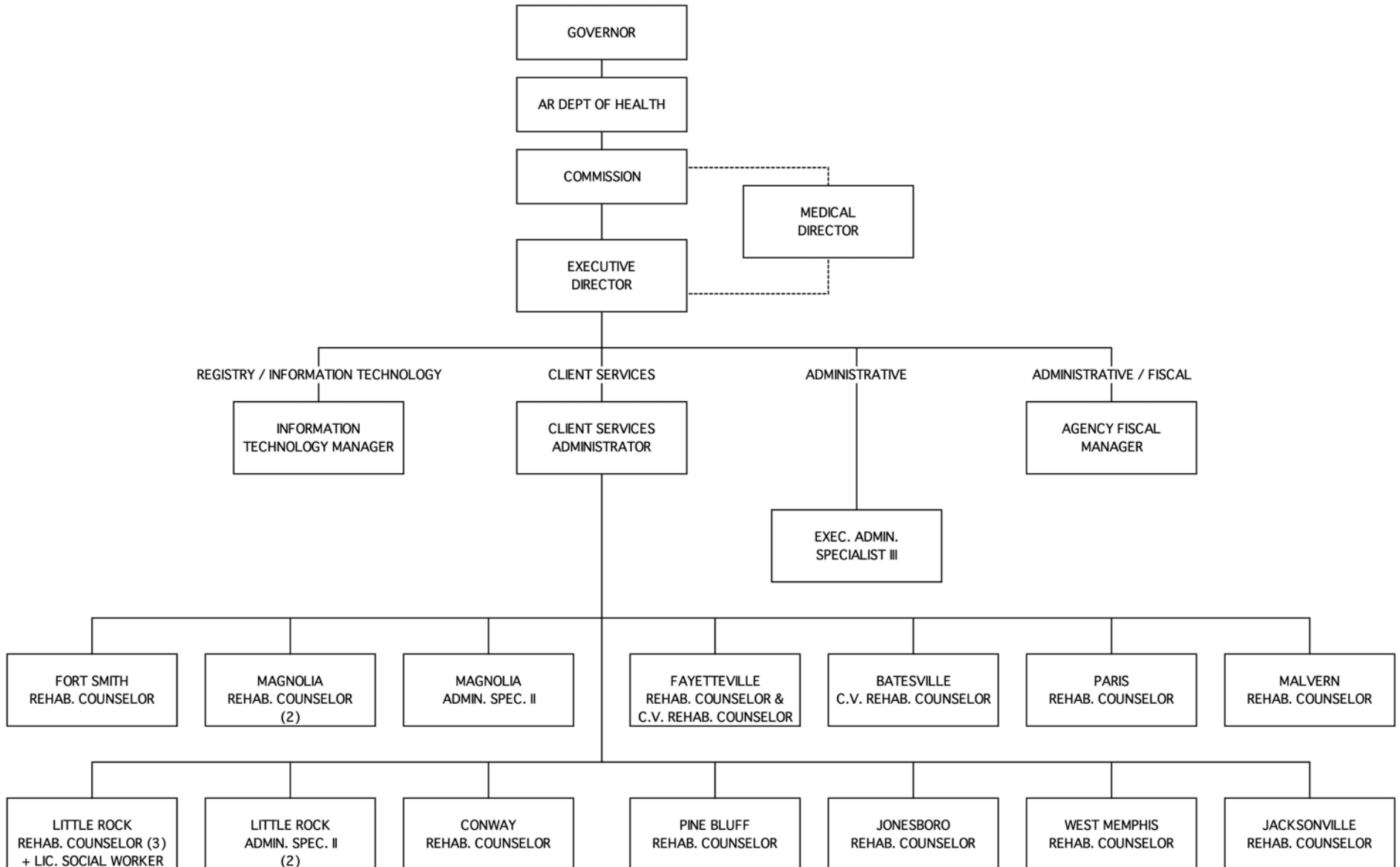
NON-TRAUMATIC (N=81)		
Cause	Count	Percent
Spondylosis (Stenosis)	20	24.7%
Spinal Cord Tumor(s)	19	23.5%
Spina Bifida	9	11.1%
Spinal Abscess	6	7.4%
Other Disease	6	7.4%
Hemorrhage/Thrombosis	5	6.2%
Guillain-Barré	4	4.9%
Unknown Disease	4	4.9%
Transverse Myelitis	3	3.7%
Multiple Sclerosis	3	3.7%
Friedreich's Ataxia	1	1.2%
Herniated Disk	1	1.2%

Referrals for Fiscal Year 2023 numbered 267. Of these, 175 met the Medical Criteria. ASCC staff continued to diligently educate referral sources over the past year on the ASCC medical criteria.

Arkansas Spinal Cord Disability Registry

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission maintains the oldest legislatively mandated spinal cord registry in the nation. It is also one of the most comprehensive in the elements collected, as well as in the scope of spinal cord disabilities (including traumatic, disease and congenital cases). The intent of the Registry is to ensure the referral of all persons with spinal cord disabilities to ensure they receive appropriate rehabilitative and other needed services.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



ASCC CASE MANAGER LOCATIONS

Central Office (Freeway Medical Tower)

5800 W 10th St
Suite 108
Little Rock, AR 72204

Columbia County Health Unit (Magnolia)

207 South Jefferson
Magnolia, AR 71753

Craighead County Health Unit (Jonesboro)

611 E. Washington Ave.
Jonesboro, AR 72401

Crittenden County Health Unit (West Memphis)

901 N. 7th St.
West Memphis, AR 72301

Faulkner County Health Unit (Conway)

811 N. Creek Drive
Conway, AR 72032

Hot Spring County Health Unit (Malvern)

2204 E. Sullenberger
Malvern, AR 72104

Independence County Health Unit (Batesville)

120 Weaver Ave.
Batesville, AR 72501

Jefferson County Health Unit (Pine Bluff)

3801 S. Hickory St.
Pine Bluff, AR 71603

Logan County Health Unit (Paris)

150 South Lowder
Paris, AR 72855

Pulaski County Health Unit (Jacksonville)

3000 N. 1st Street, PO Box 725
Jacksonville, AR 72076

Sebastian County Health Unit (Fort Smith)

3112 S. 70th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72903

Washington County Health Unit (Fayetteville)

3270 Wimberly Drive
Fayetteville, AR 72703

Footnotes:

¹Cost of Long Term Care by State: Cost of Care Report. (2022). Retrieved September 27, 2023, from <https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care.html>

²Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury Facts and Figures at a Glance. (2023). Retrieved September 27, 2023, from <https://msktc.org/sites/default/files/Facts-and-Figures-2023-Eng-508.pdf>