

## Case Management Services

Whether you are born with a spinal cord disability or sustain one later in life, coping can be difficult. The individual who has sustained a spinal cord injury or other damage to the spinal cord, and his family face a plethora of questions and concerns about the disability and how it will affect the future. Few of us are prepared to deal with the physical, emotional, social, psychological and financial concerns that arise in a split second after an injury. Hearing the diagnosis of spinal cord disability and the life changing impact it will have on your life is challenging for you and your family and friends. There are more questions than answers. At the same time, you enter a new field and need to take some actions to assure that you will get the services you need, even if you do not know what those might be yet!

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission has a staff of 15 qualified Rehabilitation Counselors in ten field offices around the state of Arkansas who are knowledgeable in the medical aspects of spinal cord injuries, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis and other spinal cord disabilities. In addition, these Counselors, often known as Case Managers, have experience and skills in navigating the sometimes-complex maze of services and programs that may be available to you. An ASCC Case Manager is assigned to every individual who is determined eligible for our services. Your Case Manager provides services at no cost to you, your insurance provider or your family. These services are available for as long as you want or need them. For most individuals, the Case Manager is very involved during the acute hospitalization, rehabilitation process, and until the person is settled at home. After that, the Case Manager will contact you on a regular basis to check on you and to assist when needed. You may call them anytime you have a question or need help with issues related to your spinal cord disability. As you gain experience in living with spinal cord disability, you may not need the Case Manager as frequently. At this point, regular contact may be less often, but they are always there if you need them. You can consider us your 'safety net' when it comes to dealing with your spinal cord disability.

Your Case Manager will come onto the scene as soon as ASCC is notified that you have sustained a spinal cord disability and can answer many questions regarding the injury and its effects on you and your family. Case Managers also assist families in identifying and applying for services to assure that they access every available resource. This may include helping to complete forms, finding needed services or just providing a telephone number. As the individual progresses through treatment, the Case Manager assists with helping you finding the best rehabilitation treatment for your needs, conducting home accessibility surveys and obtaining needed adaptive equipment such as a wheelchair. There are many services such as personal care assistance, assistive technology and home modifications and vocational rehabilitation available and the Case Manager will help you find and access the ones you need.

But, your Case Manager does not stop there. He or she is your advocate, whether your child needs help at school with the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or getting accessible services, or you need help cutting through 'red tape' to get services you need from your insurance carrier or provider, or have a questions accessibility of a building. When secondary conditions such as pressure sores, depression, bowel and bladder problems or other complications strike, the Case Manager can assist you in finding the specialized medical care and other health care services that you need. Case Managers also coordinate support groups and other activities in some areas of the state and provide technical support and advice in making accessible modifications to homes, vehicles and other equipment.

ASCC Case Managers cannot perform miracles, you may have needs that they are not able to serve, but they will make every effort to get you the services that are available to you. If you need help, call your Case Manager's office. If you do not have that number, call the ASCC Central Office at 501-296-1788 or 1-800-459-1517 to get it.