



MedStar Health

MedStar National Rehabilitation Network

Brain Injury Families and Friends Support Group

This robust support group is sponsored by MedStar NRH in partnership with the Brain Injury Association of Washington, D.C. The group was initiated eight years ago by Ellen Ramsay whose husband Bruce suffered a brain injury and who continues to participate in the program. Ramsay, a founding member of the D.C. association, facilitates the group, sharing the responsibility with MedStar NRH Team Members.

Between 20 to 40 people participate in the monthly meetings at MedStar NRH, which are open to people who have suffered some type of brain injury as a result of trauma or illness—as well as their family and caregivers.

“This is the only group of its kind in the D.C. area,” says Ramsay. “We attract people from throughout D.C., Northern Virginia and Maryland who come to connect with the brain injury community and meet other families who are going through the same experiences.”

Each meeting includes an educational component that focuses on a variety of issues, such as vocational training, travel, emerging therapies and brain injury research. “The most important component is the opportunity to share experiences and make critical social connections,” Ramsay adds. “For a number of patients their disability has isolated them, and the meetings are their only interaction they get outside of their homes.

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Letter From the President

At MedStar NRH, our mission is to help people with disabling illness or injury reach their highest level of functioning—and return to their active lives. We understand that providing rehabilitation to help them overcome their physical challenges is only part of the recovery process.

To help them deal with the emotional and social issues that arise in their transition to a “new normal” we provide support groups. Open to our patients and anyone in the community—as well as friends and caregivers—the support groups are a safe place for people to share their experiences. People who have navigated life post-injury or illness help those who are newly facing life with a physical challenge. The groups also provide education, links to resources and critical social connections.

The groups represent important collaborations between MedStar NRH and national and local community advocacy organizations. Together we are helping to empower people with disabilities with knowledge, as well as the companionship of peers who have successfully overcome their own challenges.

Sincerely,

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

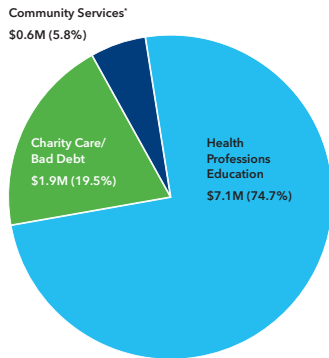
Brain Injury Families and Friends Support Group (continued)

"We also separate at some point in the meeting to allow caregivers to speak to one another and patients to talk without caregivers so that no one is apprehensive about being open and honest. Often at the end of meetings, people share email addresses and phone numbers."

In addition to the brain injury support group, MedStar NRH sponsors groups for those with amputation and spinal cord injury (SCI). The **MedStar NRH SCI Support Group**, in partnership with the United Spinal Association, helps SCI patients make the transition from rehabilitation to life back in the community. The group is led by Harsh Thakkar who sustained a SCI and whose successful life serves as a source of motivation and hope for newly injured patients.

The **MedStar NRH Amputee Support Group's** membership comprises people who have received their inpatient/outpatient care via MedStar NRH, as well as anyone in the community with limb amputation. The group has strong ties with the Amputee Coalition, a nationwide advocacy group. Each meeting features educational presentations on topics ranging from accessible travel to adaptive sports.

2016 Community Benefit Contribution: \$9.6M



*Includes subsidies, community health improvement services, community building activities, financial contributions and community benefit operations.

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