

# The Importance Of A Life Care Plan In Pediatric Spinal Cord Injury

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/EINPresswire.com/ What is a life care plan?

A child who has suffered a spinal cord injury will have significant and life-long medical and rehabilitation needs which will change as the child ages. It is a life care planner's role to provide a road map for the care of these patients to maximize function, reduce or eliminate complications, and improve the individual's quality of life going forward. All recommendations must be medically necessary and must be appropriate. Individuals and families of a spinal cord patient benefit from a life care plan because it is a concise summary of current and future needs and their associated costs. It is a management tool which they can refer to in the future and prevents mismanagement or chaos. In a spinal cord injury case an expert life care planner will provide a comprehensive plan based on the recommendations of the patients medical providers and it will address for the individual needs and desires of the patient. It is essential evidence for the court for damages related to injuries from a negligent act or a product liability case.

A life care plan is best devised by a medical profession who is a Certified Life Care Planner. In the case of a pediatric spinal cord patient, a plan will likely be a fifty page document based on a clinical interview of the patient and family, review of the medical records, a psychological assessment (in some, not all cases), and communications with the treating physicians and other medical providers. Utilizing this information, the life care planner will follow specific methodologies based on published standards that are subject to peer review to devise a comprehensive plan.

A life care plan will include the following: 1) Projected evaluations from medical professions such as physical and occupational therapy, 2) Projected therapies such as physical therapy and psychological services, 3) Wheel chair needs and their accessories, 4) Future educational needs unique to the spinal cord injury, 5) Orthotic needs (braces), 6) Home furnishings related to their spinal cord injury, 7) Home attendant care (current and future), 8) All future routine medical care, and 9) All future surgical care and hospitalizations. All needs will have a start date, frequency, stop date, and an associated cost.

Medical Perspective:

It is this my opinion from my experience from taking care of catastrophically injured children that a life care planner should be involved very early on. A life care planner will know the

rehabilitation facilities and specialist in the patient's geographic location that can deliver the best care for a child and suggest this to the parents for their own investigation. A quality inpatient acute rehabilitation center will provide a multidisciplinary rehabilitation approach which is essential for the child and the family, but is often limited in scope to maximizing function, family education, and transition to home. A life care planner involved at an early stage can outline future needs and costs, and essentially have the medical providers sign off on them as being medically necessary and appropriate. This will allow for a comprehensive plan which can then be provided to the family and followed throughout life.

#### Legal Perspective:

A life care plan is essential to prove damages in a lawsuit because it identifies all future costs that are necessary and appropriate for the care of an injured client. [Involving a life care planner](#) early during the acute rehabilitation program will allow the life care planner to discuss in person all current needs and future needs with the medical providers and have them sign off on them that they are medically necessary and appropriate. In a [catastrophic accident](#) case involving a child, economic and noneconomic damages may be millions of dollars and the defense will do whatever they can to dispute liability and damages which will include having their own life care planner (who rarely if ever interview the client, the treating doctors and who never treat the patient) challenge the cost of any future medical needs of a patient reports the [serious injury lawyer](#). This is why it is important for the treating physicians to collaborate with an expert life care planner and support the life care plan as being medically necessary. This evidence is critical to achieving a just and fair result for a child who has suffered a serious spinal injury. It is this author's opinion that if the plan is devised by a certified life care planner who is a medical doctor; trained in physical medicine and rehabilitation; with a current medical practice, then it will lead to a more thorough and comprehensive plan that will optimize all of the varied options for current and future care for the patient and it will also strengthen the patient's case in court.

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