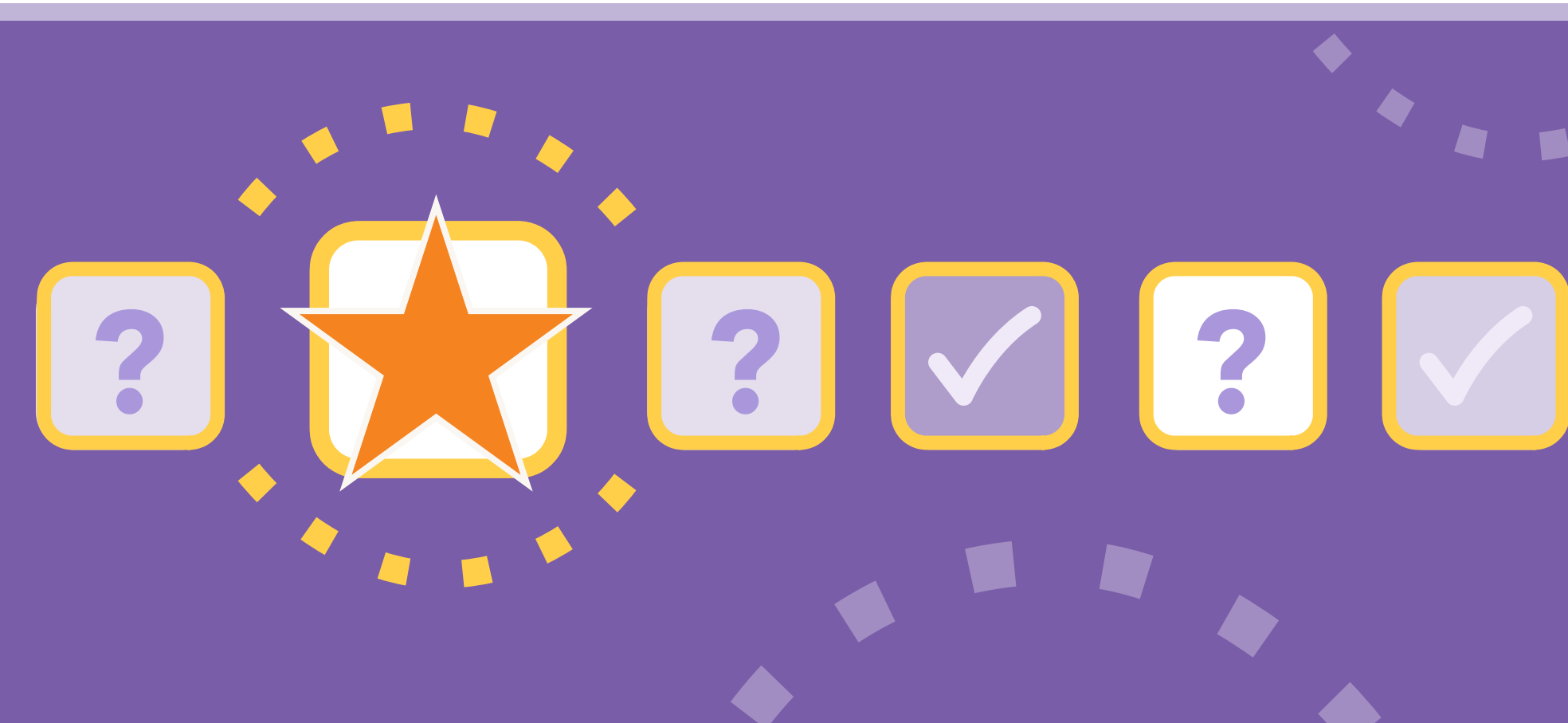
Important things to know when

# CHOOSING A REHAB PROVIDER



You are likely reading this guide because you or a loved one have experienced life-changing circumstances following a serious medical event. We recognize that you are now faced with a difficult task: What to do next?

The decisions you make in the coming days can significantly impact your future and that of your loved one, and you may be unsure where to begin. Sheltering Arms Institute—a nationally ranked physical rehabilitation provider located in Richmond, Virginia—is here to assist you in selecting a physical rehabilitation provider that best meets your recovery needs as you move on to your next chapter.

To support you through this important process, we have consulted with experts and individuals who have lived your experience and incorporated their insights into this guide to help you find the most suitable rehabilitation provider for yourself or your loved one.

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# What is physical rehabilitation and how does it differ from physical therapy alone?

While some people use “physical therapy” and “physical rehabilitation” interchangeably, physical therapy falls under the broader umbrella of physical rehabilitation.

**PHYSICAL THERAPY** focuses specifically on improving movement, strength, and function through exercises, manual techniques, and other modalities.

**PHYSICAL REHABILITATION** offers a more comprehensive and holistic range of services to address the various aspects of recovery and functional improvement, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, recreational therapy, music therapy, nursing, care management, medical psychology, spirituality, and more.

Each service plays a crucial role in addressing the different dimensions of an individual’s recovery and overall well-being.

**Physical rehabilitation can be an effective treatment for a variety of conditions, including, but not limited to:**

- Arthritis
- Balance & Vestibular Impairments
- Brain Injury
- Burns
- Cardiac Conditions
- Critical Illness, including Post-COVID
- Concussion
- Developmental Disabilities
- Joint Replacement
- Limb Loss
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Neurological Conditions
- Orthopedic Conditions
- Parkinson’s Disease
- Pelvic Health Conditions
- Post-Surgical Recovery
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Stroke
- TMJ

## Why is inpatient physical rehabilitation so important following these diagnoses and who benefits from it?

Physical rehabilitation is essential to restore function, manage pain, and improve quality of life following injury, illness, surgery, or diagnosis of a chronic condition. It helps individuals regain mobility, strength, and flexibility; prevents complications from immobility; and enhances overall independence. Physical rehab also helps individuals learn how to manage their condition and prevent future complications.

## Who is a good candidate for inpatient physical rehabilitation and does everyone need these services?

While not everyone requires physical rehabilitation, those with significant functional impairments, pain, or specific recovery goals are often good candidates. After receiving treatment at an acute care hospital for an injury, illness, or surgery, you or your loved one may need further medical observation and care once you leave the hospital; however, previous admittance to an acute care hospital is not always necessary to be considered for physical rehab. Patients may also be admitted from skilled nursing facilities or from home for inpatient services, or outpatient services may be an appropriate starting point of recovery for less severe injuries or illnesses.

# Types of Facilities that Provide Physical Rehabilitation Services

Various types of facilities can provide the necessary support, rehabilitation, and medical attention necessary for a safe transition home or to another setting in the community. It is important to understand the different types of facilities available to help you choose the best option for ongoing care for yourself or a loved one.

## Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility (IRFs)

An inpatient rehabilitation facility (IRF) provides specialized rehabilitative and therapeutic care to patients working toward regaining their strength and functionality after illness or injury. In an IRF, patients stay on-site to receive 24-hour nursing care and daily physician visits while participating in a comprehensive therapy program to enhance their strength and mobility to recover from various conditions. Patients engage in intensive therapy sessions designed to meet their individual needs for a minimum of 3 hours each day, 5-6 days a week. The average length of stay ranges from 1-3 weeks, depending on the individual's specific recovery goals, functional abilities before and after admission, and the level of support available at home. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services requires that IRFs admit patients who have medical needs requiring 24/7 care and physician oversight while participating in rehabilitation. IRFs must also verify that patients need at least 2 of the 3 following disciplines to be considered as a candidate: physical, occupational, and/or speech therapy.

## Long-Term Acute Care Hospital (LTACHs)

A long-term acute care hospital (LTACH) is designed for patients who need extended medical management and care, usually spanning 4-6 weeks. These facilities cater to individuals with complex health conditions such as those requiring ventilator support, wound treatment, intravenous (IV) therapy, feeding tubes, or recovery from extended hospitalizations. Patients receive daily oversight from a physician and are under continuous observation by a medical team. The staff at LTACHs typically includes specialized physicians like hospitalists, pulmonologists, physiatrists, and various other consultants.

## Skilled Nursing Facility (SNFs)

Skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) provide short-term rehabilitation following a hospital discharge and are designed for patients who need additional support and time to meet their recovery goals and regain independence in daily activities. They are especially appropriate for individuals who are unable to tolerate the intensity of inpatient rehabilitation facilities as therapy in SNFs is less intense and less frequent compared to IRFs.

## Nursing Home

Nursing homes are designed for individuals who require care that exceeds what can be provided at home or in an assisted living setting. These facilities offer 24/7 nursing aid and skilled nursing services, making them suitable for long-term care needs. Nursing homes range from hospital-like environments to more home-like settings. They are especially beneficial for older adults who need assistance with daily activities or specialized medical care such as memory issues.

## Home Health

Home health offers a range of medical and non-medical support for individuals who are unable to leave home, including skilled nursing and physical, occupational, and speech therapy. These services are designed for people recovering from illness, surgery, or managing chronic conditions, allowing them to receive care without the need for extended hospital stays.

It's important to recognize that certain limitations exist compared to outpatient therapy settings. For example, some advanced equipment and specialized resources may not be as readily available at home. Scheduling may require flexibility due to provider travel, and the home environment may need adjustments to optimize safety and therapy effectiveness.

## Outpatient Rehabilitation

Outpatient rehabilitation is a type of physical rehab designed to help individuals recover from less serious injuries, illnesses, or surgeries, or continue progress after discharge from a hospital setting like acute care or inpatient rehab. It can be conducted in various settings, including hospitals, private clinics, doctors' offices, and rehabilitation centers. Typically, outpatient rehab involves sessions 2-3 times a week for at least 4 weeks, though more complex cases may require up to 6 months of treatment or more. Therapy focuses on exercises that strengthen weakened muscles, stretch tight muscles, improve balance, enhance posture, and reduce pain to help people resume their daily activities by regaining mobility, functional strength, and range of motion.

# Helpful Questions to Ask Physical Rehabilitation Providers

Choosing the right facility or program can make a big difference in your or your loved one's recovery and progress, ensuring they get the right support to move forward in their recovery. To help you navigate this decision with confidence, it's important to start by asking the right questions. Understanding the type of care each facility offers and how they align with your loved one's unique needs can help you make an informed decision and select a facility that will provide the best possible medical support. The next section offers a list of helpful questions to ask each provider to guide you through this process.

## General Information

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCUHealth | Provider Option 2: _____ | Provider Option 3: _____ |
|---|---|---|---|
| How many patients can your facility accommodate? | Currently, we have 114 all-private patient rooms. We will soon be adding an additional 30 rooms, bringing our total capacity to 144. | | |
| Where is the facility located? | Our main campus is located at 2000 Wilkes Ridge Drive, Richmond, VA 23233, just 1.5 miles from I-64. Additionally, we have seven other outpatient centers located throughout Central Virginia. | | |

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: _____ | Provider Option 3: _____ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Is your facility accredited?** | Yes, Sheltering Arms Institute is accredited by DNV. | | |
| **What is the average patient length of stay at Sheltering Arms Institute?** | Average length of stay is 7-16 days; however, this varies for each person depending on their diagnosis and condition. Your length of stay may change based on your progress; you may be discharged sooner than originally planned, or your stay could increase if needed. | | |
| **What is the age range of your patients?** | Sheltering Arms Institute accepts patients age 13 and older. | | |
| **What is the visitor policy?** | Our visiting hours are from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. every day. Additionally, one adult visitor per patient may spend the night as each room is equipped with a sofa that converts into a bed. | | |
| **Can I bring a pet?** | Animals are only permitted in the facility if they are registered service animals; emotional support animals and pets are not permitted. | | |

# Features, Conditions Treated, and Services Offered

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: _____ | Provider Option 3: _____ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Do you have a rehab program specific to my/my loved one's diagnosis?** | Sheltering Arms Institute has four specialty units—stroke, spinal cord injury/complex care, traumatic brain injury, and multi-specialty—designed to treat a wide range of severe and complex neurological and orthopedic conditions. | | |
| **What diagnoses do you treat?** | We treat many conditions, including, but not limited to, stroke, spinal cord injury, brain injury, limb loss, burns, cardiac conditions, post-critical illness, and rehabilitation for a variety of other neurological and orthopedic conditions. | | |
| **Can I tour the facility beforehand?** | Yes, Sheltering Arms Institute offers tours of the facility each Mon, Wed & Fri at 2 p.m. | | |
| **Do you offer outpatient therapy?** | Yes, Sheltering Arms Institute has 8 locations throughout Central Virginia that offer a full range of outpatient therapy services and house much of the same advanced rehab technology that is utilized in our inpatient hospital to provide a seamless transition and best possible outcome. | | |

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: _____ | Provider Option 3: _____ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What are some of your facility's features?** | Sheltering Arms Institute's main therapy gym is nearly 10,000 sq. ft. We also have three on-unit gyms, advanced technology located throughout the hospital, four specialty units, wide doorways to accommodate wheelchairs, large picture windows with views of nature that let in an abundance of natural light, a café, chapel, on-site wheelchair clinic, and much more. | | |
| **What other medical services does your facility offer in addition to therapy?** | Sheltering Arms Institute offers on-site dialysis, wound care, respiratory therapy, rehab psychology, seating and positioning services through our wheelchair clinic, care management, radiology, pharmacy, and nutrition services. We also partner with industry-leading vendors to help our patients obtain custom orthotic and prosthetic devices. | | |
| **Do you provide mental health services?** | Yes, Sheltering Arms Institute offers rehab psychology services to help patients adjust to the new realities an illness or injury can present. We also offer support groups and peer mentor services for various diagnoses such as stroke, limb loss, spinal cord injury, and more. | | |

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: | Provider Option 3: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What else makes your facility unique?** | We are a non-profit with clinicians who specialize in your diagnosis and focus on a holistic approach to care. We offer recreational and music therapy, a serene garden for outdoor therapy and visiting, a peaceful chapel, a café for patients and visitors, and community engagement services to connect patients and caregivers with valuable support services. | | |
| **How do you measure patients' progress?** | Our team members regularly perform outcome assessments to track and measure progress. Our advanced technology also aids in this tracking, allowing us to quantitatively measure outcomes for each patient. | | |
| **Does the facility offer aquatic therapy services?** | We offer aquatic therapy services at our Bon Air and Reynolds outpatient centers. | | |

# Insurance & Payment Information

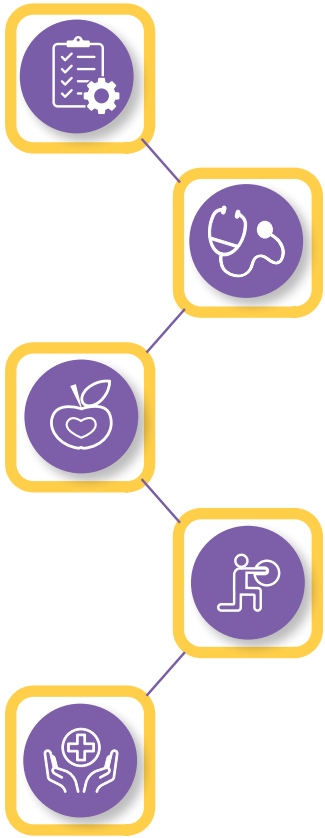
| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCUHealth | Provider Option 2: | Provider Option 3: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What types of insurance do you accept?** | We accept most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid. An admissions coordinator will work with each patient and/or their caregiver(s) to confirm specific insurance coverage. | | |
| **Do you offer financial assistance?** | Yes, Sheltering Arms Institute offers charity care and reduced-cost care depending on annual income. Patients must complete an application and screening process to see if they qualify. | | |
| **Can you provide me with an estimate of how much my care may cost?** | Yes, we can provide you with a good-faith estimate, which includes expected charges for your rehabilitation care. It is also helpful to check with your health insurance provider to ensure the services you seek are covered under your plan. | | |
| **What payment options are available for medical costs not covered by insurance?** | There are several options to pay your bill, including online and via check. You can also set up a payment plan to pay your balance over time (some restrictions may apply). Our patient financial services team can guide you through this process. | | |

# Patient Care

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: | Provider Option 3: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Does each patient have their own room?** | Yes, all patient rooms are private and equipped with en-suite bathrooms, lay-flat furniture for guests, large picture windows, flatscreen TVs, and ample storage. | | |
| **How are patients transported to your facility for inpatient rehabilitation?** | The patient's current acute care hospital may arrange transportation via ambulance, or the patient may have a family member/ caregiver provide transportation if the person is medically stable. | | |
| **What is your nurse-to-patient ratio?** | Our nurse-to-patient ratio depends on the diagnosis and acuity of each patient. Our nursing team is also comprised of nurse techs who also assist in caring for patients. | | |
| **How many hours of therapy do patients participate in each day?** | Patients are required to participate in three hours of intensive therapy each weekday based on the patient's individual care plan. | | |

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: | Provider Option 3: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **If family members are from out of town, where can they stay while a loved one participates in rehabilitation?** | One adult visitor per patient is welcome to spend the night. We also have relationships with several nearby hotels that offer discounted rates and The Doorways, another local nonprofit that provides lodging for out-of-town family members whose loved ones are currently receiving medical care in Richmond. | | |
| **How is your facility equipped to handle a medical emergency?** | Our team of skilled professionals is trained in specific protocols for various scenarios and is equipped to handle medical emergencies. Nurses and physicians are on-site and available 24/7 to provide expert care and support. | | |
| **How does your facility help patients prepare for discharge from the hospital?** | The discharge planning process begins upon admission. Each patient has a dedicated care manager who helps plan and coordinate care, from connecting you with community resources to helping navigate next steps in recovery such as home health or outpatient therapy and arranging transportation to appointments. The care manager can also provide resources for families as their loved one prepares to return to the community. | | |

| QUESTION | Sheltering Arms Institute<br>A collaboration with VCU Health | Provider Option 2: | Provider Option 3: |
|---|---|---|---|
| **How are family members and/or caregivers involved throughout their loved one's inpatient stay?** | Family members and caregivers are an important part of our transdisciplinary model of care and may be asked to participate in therapy or educational sessions, particularly as discharge nears. The main gym and on-unit gyms are intentionally designed with glass windows, allowing family members to observe their loved ones during therapy sessions. | | |
| **How do patients access their medication?** | Medications are administered to patients by our nursing staff, with all prescriptions managed through our on-site pharmacy to ensure accuracy and timely delivery. | | |
| **What resources does the facility provide for family members and caregivers?** | Through our Caregiver Ambassador Program, we can match an experienced caregiver with a new caregiver whose loved one is currently in rehab, offering education and support from a place of understanding. Additionally, we offer support groups for caregivers and provide comprehensive family training before discharge to ensure that families are confident and prepared to continue caring for their loved one. | | |



# What to Expect in Inpatient Rehabilitation

## *A Sample Patient Schedule at Sheltering Arms Institute*

Patients at inpatient rehab facilities are required to participate in a minimum of three hours of intensive therapy each day. In addition to physical, occupational, and speech therapy, based on specific needs, other therapies such as recreational therapy and music therapy are incorporated into patients' schedules.

During downtime, patients may practice therapy skills or activities of daily living. Social and recreational events provide opportunities to socialize and network with others coping with similar diagnoses while enjoying favorite activities. Support groups and peer mentor programs are specially designed for the challenges our patients and their caregivers may face. Participants can learn how to adapt to their own unique situations from specialists and each other.

The following schedule is a sample and for illustrative purposes only. Individual schedules vary based on each patient's care plan and level of injury.

**7-9 a.m.** – Physician Rounds

**8:30-9 a.m.** – Breakfast

**9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.** – 30-90 min. Sessions of Physical, Occupational, Speech, and/or Recreation Therapy

**12:30-1 p.m.** – Lunch

**1-4 p.m.** – 30-90 min. Sessions of Physical, Occupational, Speech, and/or Recreation Therapy

**4-5 p.m.** – Education/Support Groups, Caregiver Training, or Community Partner Meetings

**5:30-6 p.m.** – Dinner

**7-8 p.m.** – Medications and Bedtime Preparations

# Making the Final Decision

After asking questions and gathering details about each potential facility, it's time to choose a physical rehab provider. This may be a challenging time, so it's essential to compare the answers you have received from each provider and reflect on each facility's offerings.

By reviewing your options carefully, you can make a well-informed choice that best aligns with your or your loved one's specific needs. Remember, while a medical provider may recommend a specific facility, **this decision is ultimately yours to make.**

# Next Steps . . .

### Obtain a referral

This is a requirement for most rehabilitation facilities. Ask your case manager, social worker, or physician to send a referral to the admissions department at the facility of your choice.

### Connect with a clinical liaison from the facility

They will evaluate your healthcare needs and help guide you through the admissions process to ensure a smooth transition.

**The admissions team at Sheltering Arms Institute can be reached at (804) 342-4102.**

## About Sheltering Arms Institute

**Sheltering Arms Institute, a collaboration with VCU Health, is a non-profit, state-of-the-science physical rehabilitation hospital and network of outpatient centers located in Richmond, Virginia. Ranked the top physical rehab hospital in Virginia and among the nation's best by *U.S. News & World Report*, the Institute blends advanced technology, research, and evidence-based clinical treatment to create an innovative, transdisciplinary model of rehabilitative care that facilitates superior outcomes for patients. For more information, please visit www.ShelteringArmsInstitute.com.**

### Advanced Technology

Sheltering Arms Institute utilizes a wide array of cutting-edge rehabilitation technology, including bodyweight support, robotics, and functional electrical stimulation to provide groundbreaking physical rehabilitation and amplify results. We invest in the latest models and carefully select each piece that goes into our hospital and outpatient centers.

### Continuing Your Care Beyond Inpatient Rehabilitation

Sheltering Arms Institute offers a full range of outpatient therapy custom-designed for you. Outpatient therapy can help you continue your progress after graduation from inpatient rehabilitation or can be the starting point of your recovery for less severe injuries or illnesses. We provide a seamless transition in your recovery journey by communicating with your care team prior to beginning outpatient therapy. Additionally, our outpatient centers house much of the same advanced technology that is utilized in our hospital. This provides you with the opportunity to continue using many of the same devices as you progress in your recovery to achieve the best outcomes.

### Community Partners

To extend our continuum of services, we partner with many organizations to ensure you are connected with needed resources, now or in the future, such as accessible housing and ramps, adaptive sports, recreation, peer mentoring, support groups, and more. We also host continuing education sessions to help you grow, learn, and stay connected and provide support on the next steps in your healing journey.

# NOTES