



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lindsey Michaels at 352-313-6500 x 114
or lmichaels@wellflorida.org

Report on Spinal Cord Injuries First of Its Kind in Florida

GAINESVILLE, Florida (Feb. 8, 2010) — A recent report, *Spinal Cord Injury in Florida: A Needs and Resources Assessment*, identifies the challenges and most needed services for people living with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI).

WellFlorida Council, in partnership with the Florida Department of Health, Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program (BSCIP), The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST), and the FAAST Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center (FSCIRC) conducted Florida's first comprehensive assessment.

The SCI community identified some of the biggest challenges in the state of Florida as:

- Access to services that promote independence (e.g., ADA accessibility, personal care services and access to accessible transportation)
- Financial hardship
- Need for qualified, knowledgeable SCI providers
- Decreased access to appropriate rehabilitation services
- Access to information and education
- Need for opportunities to promote healthy living
- Need for transition support services (e.g., transitional living facilities)

The SCI community also identified services and support needed in Florida as: rehabilitation, personal care assistance, accessible and affordable housing, transportation, employment or vocational services, family/caregiver support services and peer support.

The spinal cord is the longest nerve in our bodies and allows us to perform countless functions. In 2009, there were approximately 760 new cases of SCI in Florida alone, and that number is projected to grow.

In response to the assessment, over 30 members of the SCI community met in Tampa at the end of January to begin the development of Florida's first five-year strategic plan for SCI. Participants worked to identify key priority issues, strategies and action steps. The plan is scheduled for release in June 2010.

Visit the Resources page on www.wellflorida.org to download *Spinal Cord Injury in Florida: A Needs and Resources Assessment*, or, for a snapshot of the leading issues of SCI in Florida, simply download the SCI Fact Sheet.

WellFlorida's mission is to forge partnerships in planning, research and service that build healthier communities.

###

WellFlorida Council
1785 NW 80th Blvd. Gainesville, FL 32606
Tel: (352) 313-6500 Fax: (352) 313-6515
www.wellflorida.org