Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Data Report: Quantifying Prevalence, Utilization, Costs, and Health Disparities

A report by Oregon Spinal Cord Injury Connection (OSCI) in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA), August 2025

About This Report

This is the first comprehensive analysis of spinal cord injury in Oregon, using more than a decade of healthcare claims data from the All Payer All Claims (APAC) database. The findings reveal:

- Nearly 10,000 Oregonians are living with spinal cord injury (SCI).
- The cost of SCI-related healthcare exceeded $380 million in 2022 alone.
- Most expenses are tied to inpatient care, long-term facilities, and preventable complications such as pressure injuries and urinary tract infections.

By publishing this data, OSCI aims to raise awareness, equip stakeholders with reliable evidence, and inspire collaborative action that improves health outcomes for people with SCI while reducing costs to hospitals, insurers, and the State.

Executive Summary

For too long, people living with spinal cord injuries (SCI) in Oregon have faced steep and often invisible barriers to health and well-being. Navigating the healthcare system is complicated, fragmented, and costly — and without clear data, the true scope of the problem has remained hidden. Until now, no statewide effort has measured how many Oregonians are living with SCI, what their needs look like, or what it costs our healthcare system to meet (or fail to meet) those needs.

This report changes that. This is Oregon's first comprehensive analysis of spinal cord injury, built from more than a decade of healthcare claims data. The findings are striking: more than **10,000[1] people in Oregon** are living with SCI, and in 2022 alone, the cost of their care **exceeded $380 million**. Much of this spending is tied to preventable complications like pressure injuries and urinary tract infections, and to frequent hospital visits and rehospitalizations. **Behind every number is a person whose health and quality of life depend on access to coordinated, community-centered care.**

Key Findings

- **Prevalence & Incidence**: 10,000 Oregonians with SCI from 2011–2022, with incidence rising in older adults.
- **Cost of Care**: SCI-related healthcare spending surpassed $380 million in 2022, with steep increases in inpatient and long-term care costs.
- **Healthcare Utilization**: High levels of outpatient visits, emergency department use, and rehospitalizations highlight complex ongoing needs.
- **Secondary Complications**: Conditions such as pressure ulcers, urinary tract infections, pneumonia, and depression contribute significantly to both costs and reduced quality of life.

[1] Estimates of the total SCI population from APAC do not include certain populations whose data do not appear in APAC, or are not able to be released to most data requestors. In particular, approximately 19.4% of people with a spinal cord injury in Oregon in 2022 with data in APAC only had traditional, fee-for-service, Medicare coverage over the course of the year, with no other medical insurance coverage. Traditional Medicare data could not be released to OSCI due to OHA's Data Use Agreement (DUA) with CMS, so detailed data on this significant population is missing.

The message is clear: Oregon has an opportunity — and a responsibility — to do better. By investing in solutions that bridge medical care and lived experience, such as Community Health Workers with SCI, we can improve health outcomes while reducing costs to hospitals, insurers, and the State. Hospitals and health systems can lead the way by funding these positions, strengthening care coordination, and preventing complications that drive up spending.

Our goal in publishing this report is to raise awareness, put reliable data into the hands of policymakers, health systems, and advocates, and spark collaborative action. With the right investments, Oregon can ensure that people with SCI not only survive, but thrive — and move closer to its 2030 vision of eliminating health inequities.

Read the full whitepaper here:
https://www.oregonsci.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/OSCI-Data-White-Paper-9.8.2025.pdf