



Craig outpatient Michael Solano uses a lift provided by Project EQL to access his home.

Craig is a premier, nonprofit rehabilitation hospital that serves people living with spinal cord injury (SCI) and brain injury (BI) through rehabilitative care, research, and advocacy. We pride ourselves on a whole-person, family-centered, team-based approach that focuses on each patient's physical, cognitive, and psychological well-being in the context of his or her personal rehabilitation goals.

In any given year, between 82% and 91% of Craig patients return to their homes upon discharge, compared to 69% at other rehabilitation hospitals. Craig graduates also exceed national averages in remaining healthy and avoiding hospitalizations.

To achieve these extraordinary results, from the time of admission, Craig's clinical care managers (CCMs) work closely with families to help them adjust to injury, understand insurance policies, and plan for the transition home. They reduce families' burden by advocating with health insurance providers and identifying other resources to maximize coverage. When families still have unmet financial needs, CCMs submit requests to the Craig Foundation for patient assistance funds. These funds, contributed by generous donors, help families weather transitional financial difficulties and access essential tools for



CRAIG
FOUNDATION

UNYIELDING DETERMINATION.
EMPOWERING LIVES.

EQUIPMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE

independence, such as home modifications, caregiver training, and medical equipment.

Project EQL, a fund of the Craig Hospital Foundation, helps ensure that every patient at Craig returns home with the basic adaptive equipment that will maximize overall function, health and life quality, regardless of the patient's financial or insurance status. Additionally, we fundraise dollars and equipment to help patients with their assistive technology needs.



\$85,000

conservative cost of
equipment need by a
person with acute SCI

140+

patients assisted annually
with equipment

[craighospital.org/
foundation/equipment-for-
independence](http://craighospital.org/foundation/equipment-for-independence)



**“The lift allows me to
get out of my house in
an emergency, to be
involved with my son
and daughter, and to be
a husband. The shower
equipment allows me to
be independent. That
means everything.”**

**Michael Solano,
Craig graduate**

THE NEED

Patients come to Craig after a serious neurological injury has suddenly transformed their lives – physically, psychologically, and often financially. These injuries frequently lead to unforeseeable income loss, and the astronomical costs of long-term medical care, durable medical equipment, and home modifications can push vulnerable families underwater.

For those with catastrophic injuries, the consequences are profound. For a person with an acute SCI, for example, the basic adaptive equipment needed that ranges in cost from \$85,000 to over \$100,000. The majority of private insurance companies and other third-party payors cover only a fraction of these expenses. Moreover, these costs are separate from the other immense financial burdens associated with catastrophic injury, such as intensive acute care, which patients often receive before arriving at Craig; rehabilitation therapy, which lasts an average of two to four months; and complex ongoing health maintenance issues.

At Craig, we believe strongly that each patient should go home with the right equipment to live independently. Our graduates often require expensive durable medical equipment (DME), including wheelchairs, hospital beds, lifts, and bathroom accessibility equipment, for mobility and life quality as well as assistive technology including voice to text software, Livescribe kits, and other technology to control their environment such as smart speakers and smart home features. Through Project EQL, we purchase essential DME and assistive technology for patients whose financial situation would otherwise prevent them from obtaining it.

In recent years, insurance coverage for durable medical equipment has contracted, even as the cost of these items has increased. As a result, the Craig Foundation distributes \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually from Project EQL funds to help our patients purchase the DME they need.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Each Craig inpatient works with an interdisciplinary team, with a clinical care manager (CCM) coordinating care. CCMs evaluate what DME and assistive technology each patient needs upon discharge, assess insurance coverage and financial capacity, and help to procure the equipment. When Craig’s clinical care managers discover that insurance, family finances, and other funding sources are inadequate to cover the cost of the DME a patient needs, they find other ways to assist the patient.

Before tapping Project EQL funds, care managers first look in our donated equipment fleet, which includes used equipment in good condition contributed by families of Craig alumni, demo equipment solicited from suppliers, and equipment being “retired” from use in the hospital. When DME must be purchased, our primary supplier provides us a 30% discount on wheelchairs and 15% on other equipment. Craig’s Rehabilitation Engineering team then customizes donated or purchased equipment to meet individual patients’ needs.

Despite these strategies, and despite the limited help that insurance provides, it can be prohibitively costly for patients to obtain equipment that meets their specific needs. In such cases, we use Project EQL funds to cover the gap.

The number of patients served by Project EQL varies from year to year depending on the mix of patients, their injuries, and the insurance and other financial resources available to them. In recent years, generous contributors to Project EQL have annually helped 115 to 160 recently injured patients whose income or insurance benefits would otherwise be insufficient to pay for basic adaptive equipment.

THE RESULTS

Catastrophic spinal cord or brain injuries bring sudden and momentous life changes. As Craig graduates return home, they encounter from a very different perspective the places and daily routines that they used to navigate effortlessly. By ensuring access to essential adaptive equipment, supporters of Project EQL make it possible for every Craig graduate to resume his or her life with greater ease, independence, safety and dignity. The remarkable end result is a comprehensive, personalized equipment plan for every patient who graduates from Craig, with Project EQL funds covering any outstanding financial need.