

Trauma Care: Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is an adult level 1 trauma center?

A. Licensed trauma centers are facilities specially equipped to provide comprehensive, multidisciplinary medical services to trauma victims. There are stringent requirements that must be met in order to be a licensed trauma center. Trauma centers are typically classified as Level 1, 2 or 3 based on the resources, equipment and specialists provided, as well as the trauma volume and research and educational commitment. To read more about trauma care and centers, visit the Trauma Center Association of America online at traumafoundation.org and the American College of Surgeons at facs.org/trauma.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has its own evaluation process for designating trauma centers in the state. To see the list of state-designated trauma centers by region, go to www.idph.state.il.us/ems.

Q. How many trauma centers does Chicagoland have?

A. There are eight adult and two pediatric level 1 trauma centers serving the Chicago area. Six level 1 trauma centers are located within the Chicago city limits: four serve adults (at Stroger, Mount Sinai, Northwestern Memorial and Advocate Illinois Masonic hospitals) and two serve children (University of Chicago Medicine Comer Children's Hospital and Lurie Children's). There are other level 1 trauma centers in Cook County that serve patients from Chicago, including Advocate Christ Medical center in Oak Lawn and Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood.

Q. How is the University of Chicago Medicine committed to serving people who live on the South Side?

A. In recent years, we have worked to increase access to high-quality medical care for all patients, particularly those who live on the South Side. As a result of our efforts, the volume of patients in our emergency departments, inpatient services, operating rooms and intensive care units has increased substantially in the last years — more than any hospital in the Chicago area. More than 46 percent of our patients come from the South Side; in some services, more than 60 to 70 percent are South Side residents. For instance:

- 60 percent of our cardiovascular patients are from the South Side, many receiving life-saving care resulting from conditions such as heart attacks
- 60 percent of births are from new moms, especially with high-risk pregnancies, in our immediate area
- 80 percent of our emergency room patients — adult and pediatric — are also from the South Side

The University of Chicago Medicine is one of the largest providers in the state of health care services (both inpatient and outpatient) to patients whose health insurance is through the Illinois Medicaid program. Expansion of Medicaid has been the primary way in which health insurance has been extended to the people of Illinois through the Affordable Care Act, and, as a result, the number of people seeking care at the University of Chicago has increased significantly in recent years.

We also routinely take transfers from other South Side hospitals of patients who require the expertise for conditions of high complexity. In addition, our burn unit, pediatric level 1 trauma center, pediatric and obstetrics services predominantly serve the South Side.