

Senate Resolution 1014

By: Senator Thomas of the 10th

A RESOLUTION

1 Recognizing and commending Shepherd Center and urging each hospital, trauma center, or
2 other medical facility in the State of Georgia to consult with and make referrals to Shepherd
3 Center when presented with emergency patients identified as having suffered a spinal cord
4 injury; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, it is estimated that every year there are approximately 11,000 people in the
6 United States who sustain spinal cord injury; and

7 WHEREAS, spinal cord injury is damage to the spinal cord that results in a loss of
8 functioning, such as mobility or feeling; and

9 WHEREAS, Shepherd Center of Atlanta, Georgia, the country's largest catastrophic care
10 hospital, specializes in the treatment of people with spinal cord injury and disease, acquired
11 brain injury, multiple sclerosis, and other neuromuscular disorders and urological problems;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, founded in 1975, Shepherd Center is a 100 bed nonprofit hospital that offers a
14 continuum of health care services, from intensive care through inpatient medical and surgical
15 care, rehabilitation, day rehabilitation, and outpatient and residential services; and

16 WHEREAS, for the past 26 years, Shepherd Center has provided care for thousands of
17 Georgians and residents from over 35 other states and foreign countries with spinal cord
18 injuries; and

19 WHEREAS, Shepherd Center is committed to its goal of returning catastrophically injured
20 patients to the highest level of functioning possible by providing a level of expertise that
21 general hospitals simply cannot equal; and

1 WHEREAS, from just moments after injury occurs to years after recovery, Shepherd Center
2 is equipped to provide the full spectrum of acute, rehabilitative, and follow-up treatment,
3 which are features which distinguish it as a national leader in specialized rehabilitation; and

4 WHEREAS, Shepherd Center has been recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as one
5 of the country's top 20 rehabilitation facilities; and

6 WHEREAS, the federal government has also recognized Shepherd Center's expertise by
7 designating it as a "Model System of Care" for individuals with spinal cord and brain
8 injuries, an honor that less than 1 percent of rehabilitation hospitals and units can claim; and

9 WHEREAS, spinal cord injury is a catastrophic injury that impacts almost all aspects of the
10 injured person's life and the recovery process is often long and frustrating for the person with
11 the injury as well as his or her family and friends; and

12 WHEREAS, Shepherd Center offers a unique Community Bridge program that extends
13 Shepherd Center's commitment into the patient's home for up to a year after the injury; and

14 WHEREAS, Shepherd Center's record of positive outcome is the best among similar
15 facilities in the United States as measured by the degree of functional improvement from
16 admission to discharge; and

17 WHEREAS, 25 percent of Shepherd Center patients are Medicaid or medicare eligible and
18 include the largest percentage of Medicaid patients of any similar health care facility in the
19 United States; and

20 WHEREAS, additionally, Shepherd Center employs four times as many employees per
21 patient as any similar health care facility; and

22 WHEREAS, Shepherd Center is one of the key linchpins in an effective state trauma system
23 that encourages early intervention and transfer for patients presented to health care facilities
24 with signs of spinal cord injury.

25 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
26 recognize and commend Shepherd Center as the preeminent catastrophic care and
27 rehabilitation facility in this state providing state-of-the-art comprehensive surgical, medical,

1 rehabilitation, and long-term follow-up care to individuals with spinal cord injuries and
2 devoted to its mission of returning patients to the highest level of independence possible.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this body finds that a catastrophic injury, such as a
4 spinal cord injury, is a life-changing event that calls for highly specialized treatment
5 throughout the course of an individual's life and, in recognition of that finding, strongly
6 urges each hospital, trauma center, or other medical facility in this state which is presented
7 with a patient for emergency treatment who is identified as having suffered a spinal cord
8 injury to make contact, as soon as practicable, with Shepherd Center for the purpose of
9 medical consultation and to facilitate the transferral of such patient to Shepherd Center as
10 soon as practicable.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
12 to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to each hospital, emergency medical services
13 system, and ambulance service in the State of Georgia.