

University of Washington Spinal Cord Injury Medicine Fellowship Program

Academic year 2026-2027

UW Medicine

DEPARTMENT OF
REHABILITATION MEDICINE

Mission and Aims

MISSION

- The mission of the University of Washington (UW) Spinal Cord Injury Medicine (SCIM) fellowship training program is to provide physicians with the knowledge and skills to deliver comprehensive, quality, and compassionate care to individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) and to support the UW Medicine aim to improve the health of the public. We are dedicated to providing care to individuals throughout the lifetime of injury and strive to maximize health, independence, productivity, and quality of life. We value person-centered care, interdisciplinary collaboration, education, and academic scholarship.

AIMS

- The University of Washington SCIM fellowship training program aims to train fellows who will dedicate a significant portion of their careers in the delivery of care to individuals with SCI, will continue providing SCI education to peers, trainees, and/or consumers, and will dedicate time to community activities advocating for individuals with SCI.

UW SCIM Fellowship History

- Dr. Margaret Hammond, UW Rehabilitation Professor/VA SCI National Chief Consultant, at forefront of SCIM fellowship development
- ACGME accredited since 1998
 - 35 fellow graduates since 1998
- Currently approved for 2 SCIM fellows
 - Funding is through UW and Craig H. Neilsen Foundation
 - Grant awarded since 2017 and secured through 2027

UW SCI Medicine Board Certified Staff

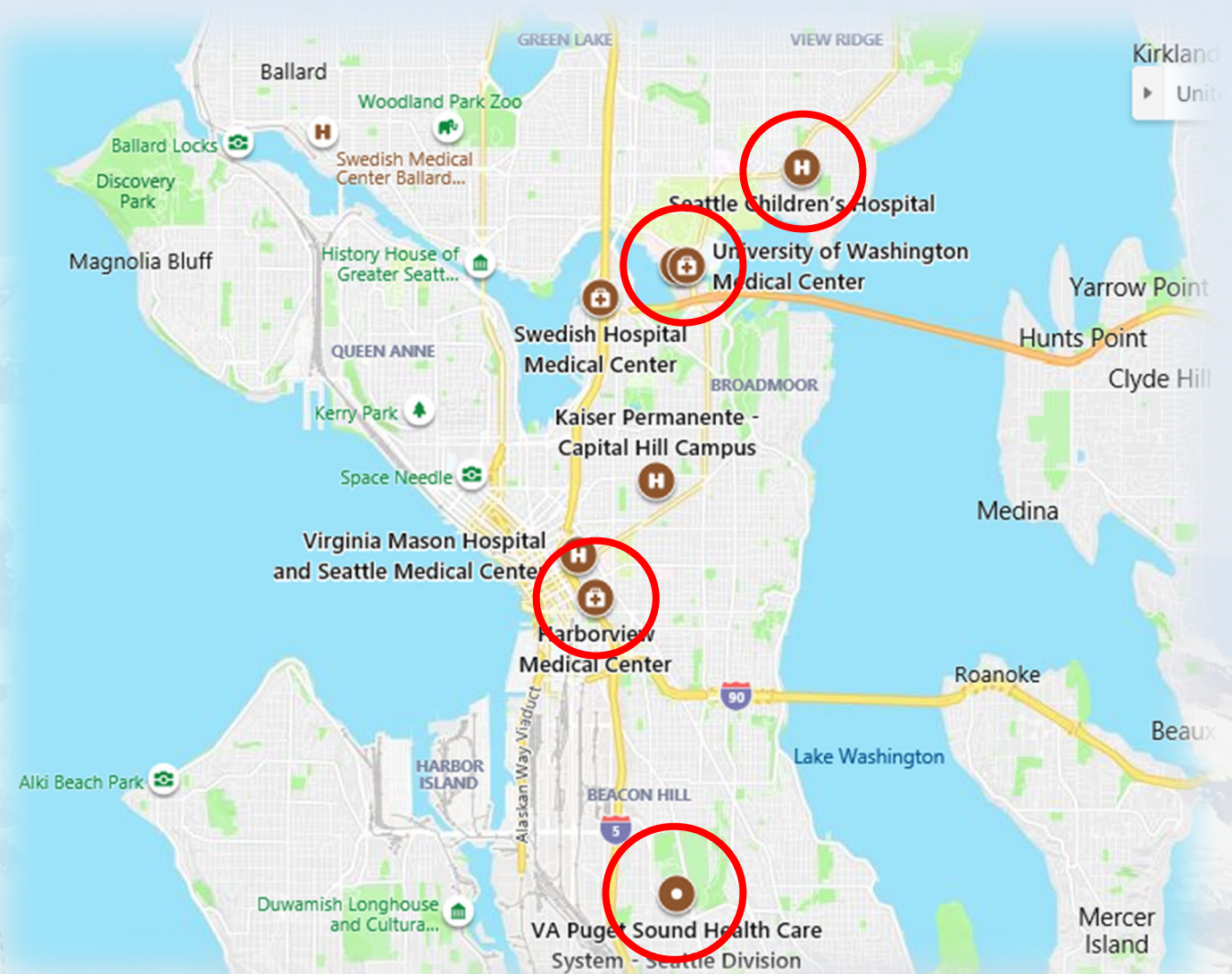
- UW Department of Rehabilitation Medicine has one of the largest number of SCI board certified physicians in the country!
- SCIM Fellowship Core Faculty
 - Juan Asanza
 - Heather Barnett
 - Stephen Burns
 - Carolyn Campbell
 - Debby Crane
 - Kate Delaney
 - Katya Radkevich
 - Shawn Song
 - Kendl Sankary
 - Alicia Seeds
 - Jelena Svircev

Rotation Schedule

- The 12-month academic year is divided into rotations of at least 1 month duration.
 - 4 months inpatient SCI at VA and Harborview Medical Center (2 months at each site)
 - 4 months outpatient SCI: VA, Harborview Medical Center, University of Washington, and Seattle Children's Hospital
 - 2 months Harborview Medical Center consults - acute SCI consults
 - 2 months VA SCI consults and academic/research activities
 - A SCIM fellow continuity clinic is integrated into the schedule and occurs every other week at HMC.

Rotation sites

All sites within ~ 7 miles



University of Washington Medical Center-Montlake

SCI Clinic

Spasticity Clinic

Transitions Clinic

Neuromuscular Pulmonary
Clinic

Patient population: Medically
complex SCI (complications of
surgery), trauma, congenital
SCI



Seattle Children's Hospital

Spina Bifida Clinic (2-4 days
per year)



Harborview Medical Center, Inpatient SCI

Patient population: “Classic SCI”
younger males, primarily traumatic
(but also infectious and non-
traumatic), psychosocially complex;
HMC is a Safety Net Hospital

Inpatient SCI: General rehab unit

- 26 bed unit
- SCIM fellow follows SCI pts and serves as “pretending” to PMR residents, usually assigned to work with SCI board certified attending physician



Harborview Medical Center, Outpatient SCI

- Acute SCI consults: Gen rehab consult service, SCIM fellow sees SCI pts only
 - 4-5 new injuries per week with follow-up on prior pts = following 8-10 pts at a time
 - ~125 new cervical spine SCI per year
- Outpatient SCI:
 - SCI Clinics (SCI care and spasticity management)
 - SCI Continuity Clinic every other week with Dr. Sankary

VA Puget Sound – Outpatient SCI

VA SCI Clinic

SCI-specific issues, general
primary care for Vets with SCI

ALS Clinic with Rehab Care Service
(PMR physicians)

MS Clinic with Rehab Care Service

Neuro-Urology Clinic (2-4 days per
year)

Wound Care Clinic (2-4 days per
year)

Consultation on Vets in MICU, SICU,
Gen Med/Surg wards



VA Puget Sound – Inpatient SCI

- 38-bed SCI unit (current reduced census due to nurse staffing)
- Life-long care. Historically:
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ (on average) pts receiving acute/subacute rehab
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ pts receiving medical care (acute medical issues, vent weaning, urologic issues, fracture management)
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ pts receiving wound care (conservative healing, post-flap healing)
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ pts completing annual evaluations or therapy related admissions
- Patient population: Older male Veteran, medically/psychosocially complex, 50% traumatic/50% non-traumatic SCI

Ventilator Management

- VA Inpatient:
 - 3 ventilators/respiratory high-risk beds
 - 2-3 Vets weaned from vents per year; no diaphragm pacers (yet!)
- HMC:
 - Inpt 2 vent beds typically pts with SCI
 - Inpt ~5 vent weans per year
 - Consults: lots of experience collaborating as consultant on resp issues, including vent weaning
- Recent fellow comments: Inpatient rehab vent numbers are probably not too far off from elsewhere besides the really dedicated standalone... You definitely see a lot on HMC consults too, and we have good infrastructure and faculty to teach vent management. I have 20+ pts on the list of vented patients I've provided.

Injectons/Intrathecal Baclofen

- Hands-on ITB and injections at UW/HMC Clinics
- Small number of Vets with ITB
- ~50 procedures per year (somewhat dependent on fellow interest)
- Opportunities to participate in ultrasound labs alongside PMR residents



Ultrasound

- Ultrasound available for use at VA and HMC.
- Exploring creative ways to integrate ultrasound into clinical care



SCI Fellow Didactics

- Weekly Friday noontime didactics
- Delivered by clinicians 3 weeks/mon
 - Directed at level of SCIM Fellows, but PMR residents and interdisciplinary colleagues regularly attend
 - Often includes a journal article review related to the topic
- Delivered by SCIM fellow 1 week/mon
 - Directed at level of PMR resident
 - Opportunity to advance presentation skills and have a “tried and true” presentation for job interviews

Example of SCI Didactics Lecture Schedule

Month	Day	Topic
January	7 th	Spinal cord tumors
	14 th	Inflammation in SCI
	21 st	Driver's rehab
	28 th	Resident Lecture
February	4 th	Stem cell therapies
	11 th	Acute SCI evaluation
	18 th	Acid/base disorders
	25 th	Resident Lecture
March	4 th	MSK US in SCI Practice
	11 th	MS
	18 th	Surgical management of syrinx, HCP and tethered SC
	25 th	Resident Lecture
April	1 st	Imaging of the spine: post-surgical changes
	8 th	Hereditary/congenital
	15 th	Polio/Post-Polio
	22 nd	TBI and SCI
	29 th	Pregnancy After SCI
May	6 th	Surgical Management of SCI Bowel & Bladder
	13 th	OSA equipment, CPAP
	20 th	Robotics or e-stim
	27 th	Resident lecture

Additional Didactic Lectures

- Weekly SCI Urology Rounds with Neuro-Urologist (Harborview Chief of Urology Service)
- Bi-weekly Neuroradiology/Neurosurgery Rounds
- Regular “recheck” sessions (1-2 times per month) led by PT/OT
- Monthly SCI QI meeting (SCI Med fellows invited)
- Opportunities to participate in annual/ or “one-off” sessions:
 - UW GME Quality Improvement and Patient Safety course
 - UW GME Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity course

Academic opportunities

- Teaching: Beside teaching, SCI Med fellow didactics, PMR resident Neurorehab course, med student small group SCI discussion, NW SCI Forum consumer education
- QI projects
 - E-ISNCSCI exam
 - SCI inpt/outpt satisfaction survey
 - Virtual annual evaluation satisfaction survey
 - Colonoscopy preparation in Vets with SCI
 - Subacute vs acute rehabilitation in Vets with SCI
 - Rehospitalization in Veterans with SCI
- Opportunities for state-level policy advocacy through Washington State Medical Association (free for PMR residents and fellows to join); fellows are encouraged to become involved with PMR/SCI organizations (AAPMR, ASCIP)
- Self-study/review: Boards preparation

Academic opportunities – clinical research

- Subacute vs acute level rehab in Vets with SCI – ASCIP presentation
- Lower limb loss in SCI – ASCIP poster, publication
- Transition from MWC to PWC – ASCIP poster
- Colonoscopy prep in SCI – ASCIP presentation, 2 publications
- Outcomes of flap surgery in SCI – ASCIP presentation, publication
- Late ventilatory failure in Veterans with SCI – ASCIP poster 2021 (best poster by trainee award!)
- COVID-19 vaccine breakthrough in Veterans with SCI – ASIA presentation 2021, publication
- Current and Projected Workforce of Spinal Cord Injury Medicine Physicians Through 2040 - publication
- Vital sign differences between septic patients with tetraplegia and paraplegia - publication
- Adaptive curling: sweeping away barriers - publication
- Hydronephrosis due to inferior vena cava filter extravasation: A case report - ASCIP poster, case report
- Violence related injury and SCI - research in progress

Diversity of SCIM physician academic activities

- >100 peer reviewed publications by SCI physician staff (mostly by S. Burns!)
- All SCI physicians involved with fellow and resident teaching
- Active involvement with:
 - UW PMR residency committees
 - VA hospital committees
 - UW/HMC/School of Medicine committees
 - ASCIP/APS leadership
 - ASIA leadership
 - ABPMR committees and examinations
 - ACGME committees
 - CARF

Adaptive Sporting

- VA SCI actively involved with adaptive sporting
 - Handcycles, rugby chairs, tennis chairs
 - Pool on-site at VA with pool therapy, kayaking
 - Recreation therapy organizes adaptive curling and fencing clinics
- Seattle has a strong adaptive sporting presence
 - Seattle Slam wheelchair rugby team
 - Wheelchair basketball teams in Seattle and Tacoma
 - Power soccer
 - Sled hockey team
 - Footloose sailing
 - Seattle Adaptive Sports: <http://www.seattleadaptivesports.org/>
 - Outdoors for All: <https://outdoorsforall.org/>

Inclusion and Diversity

- Actively exploring opportunities for SCIM fellow involvement with diversity issues.
- Ideas include:
 - Career day presentations at local middle and high schools
 - Participation in lectures offered by UW Center for Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (CEDI) and Center for Leadership and Innovation in Medical Education (CLIME)
 - Participation with Network of Underrepresented Residents and Fellows (NURF) - Doctor for a Day Program
 - Outreach pipeline program whose mission is to expose, inspire and cultivate under-represented middle and high school students of color to enter careers in healthcare

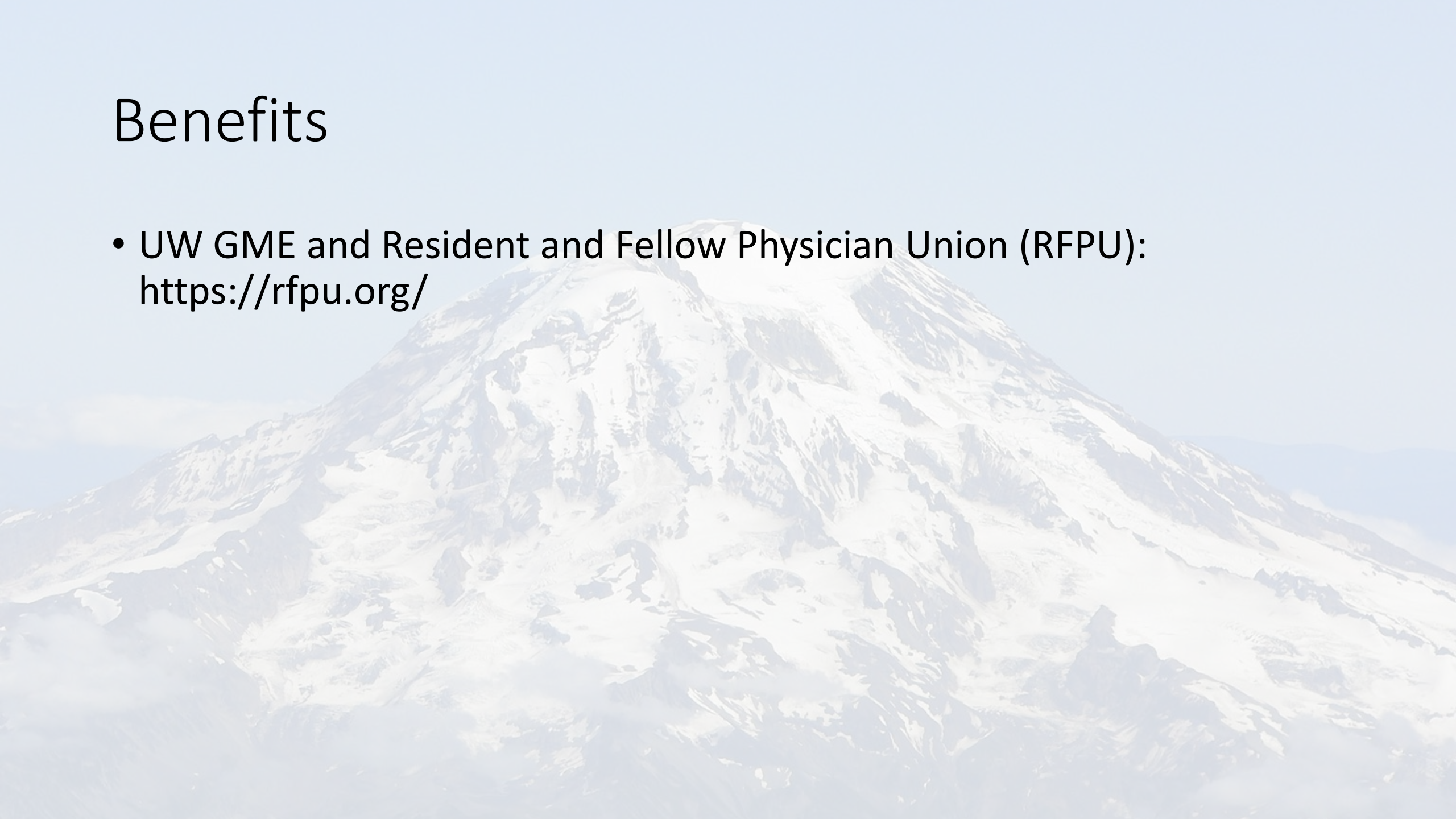


Mentorship

- Regular formal and informal meetings with SCI Medicine Fellowship Director
- Formally mentor assigned upon request
- Informal guidance from all SCI attending staff
 - From former fellow: “Personally had multiple UW attendings reach out on my behalf, gave me connections”
- Strength – large nationwide network of UW fellowship graduates is helpful for academic and career opportunities!

Benefits

- UW GME and Resident and Fellow Physician Union (RFPU):
<https://rfpu.org/>



Leave and salary

- Leave*:
 - 20 weekday vacation days
 - 17 sick leave days
 - 10 professional leave days (interviews, board exams, conferences)
 - 1 personal day per calendar year
- Salary: PGY-5 ~\$87,960
- Professional development funds: \$450
- Travel: \$1200

*SCIM Fellows are subject to ABPMR limit of 30 workdays away from training (exclusive of conference days)

Potentially perceived weaknesses

- Less procedurally focused fellowship – we don't a high volume of injections, ultrasound evaluations, or baclofen pump management
- Fewer ventilator management opportunities
- Few pediatric SCI opportunities
 - Peds seen at SCH – Spina Bifida clinic 2-4 days per year
 - Peds occasionally seen in consult at HMC
- Facilities are vintage and cozy (aka old and cramped)

Strengths

- Patient experience: Exposure to a diverse patient population across 4 institutions from very acute to very chronic SCI
- Large number of SCIM board certified faculty with varied academic and administrative interests
- Relative flexibility in the fellowship schedule to accommodate to fellow-specific interests
- Committed interdisciplinary teams with SCI-specific skill sets
- SCIM fellow didactics
- Collaboration and co-learning potential with UW Rehab fellows in Brain Injury, Pedi Rehab, Amputee, Cancer Rehab, Sports Medicine and trainees in PT, OT, Rehab Psychology and Prosthetics/Orthotics

We are most proud...

...of the successes of our UW SCI Medicine fellowship graduates



SCIM Fellow Board Certification

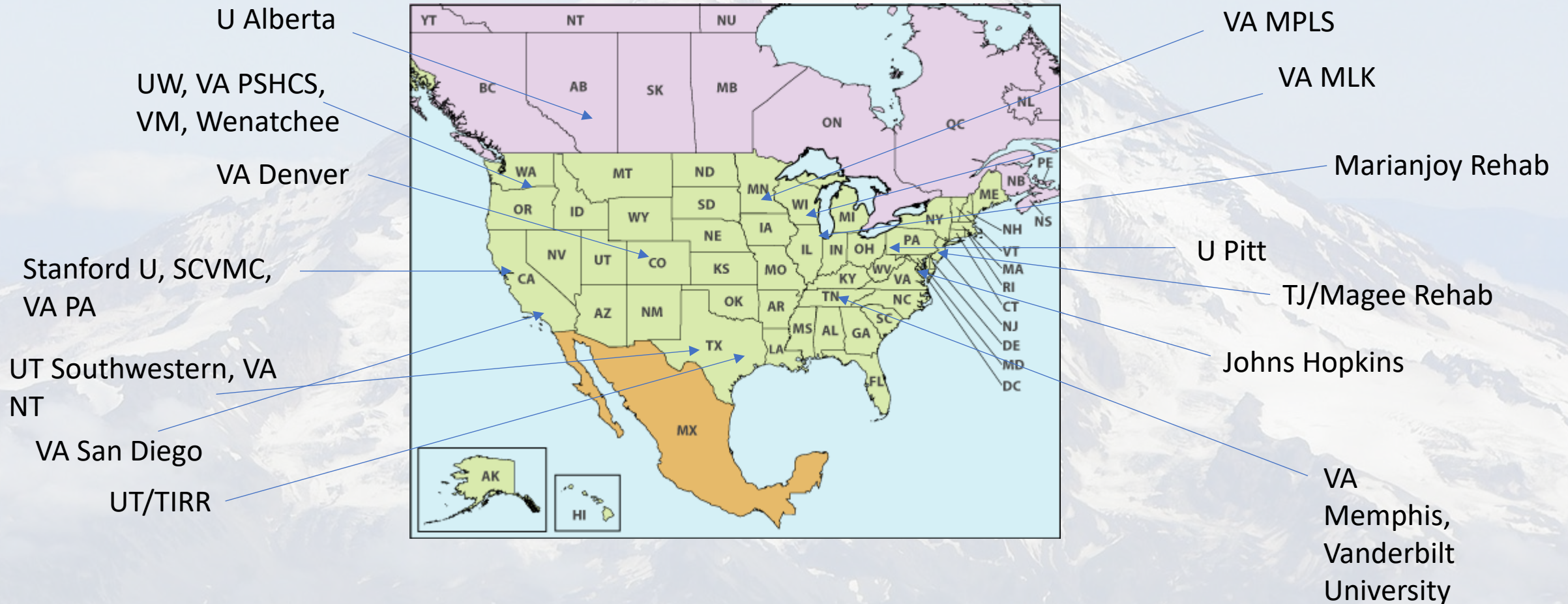
- The majority of SCIM fellows take ABPMR SCIM board certification exam within 2 years of completing fellowship
- Fellows have successfully passed board certification exam



Where do UW grads go?

Most graduates dedicate >50% of time (if not 100%!) to SCI

Most remain in academic institutions



Program Development 2026-2027

- No anticipated changes to leadership or overall structure of the SCIM fellowship program
- SCI Cancer Rehab Clinic opportunities are being considered
- UW Rehabilitation Fellowship Program Directors are exploring opportunities to bring together the UW rehabilitation fellows for collective learning and engagement. Ideas include:
 - Neurorehabilitation procedures course
 - Unified fellow didactics (social hour!)
 - Community integration with adaptive sport activities

SCIM Fellowship Interviews for Academic Year 2026-2027

- All SCIM fellowship interviews in 2025 for fellowship positions in academic year 2026-2027 will be offered in a virtual format
- J. Svircev MD SCIM fellowship director speaks with each applicant before scheduling an “official” virtual interview
- Interviews will be scheduled beginning June
- Interviews are generally on Fridays and for 2-3 hours
- UW SCIM Fellowship participates in The Match with NRMP

Match Dates for 2025-2026

- Match Opens: August 6, 2025
- Ranking Opens: September 3, 2025
- Ranking Closes: October 8, 2025
- Match Day: October 22, 2025