



American Academy  
of Value Based Care

# Chronic Spinal Cord Disorders

## Quick Reference Guide

2026

## AAVBC Chronic Spinal Cord Disorders - Quick Reference Guide

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## 1. CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

**Definition:** Chronic spinal cord injury refers to a permanent and/or progressive interruption in the conduction of impulses across the neurons and tracts of the spinal cord. It may be due to a traumatic or a nontraumatic cause, such as mechanical distortion or vascular ischemia of the spinal cord arising from trauma, tumor, infection, or other space-occupying lesions. The term is generally used when elements of spinal cord injury have been present for at least 1 year. The accompanying neurologic deficits that occur may be stable or progressive and lead to disability with associated spasticity, joint contractures, sensory changes, and sphincter and locomotion abnormalities.<sup>1</sup>

**ICD-10 Codes:** Use G95.x for diseases of the spinal cord. **G95.0** (Syringomyelia and syringobulbia), **G95.1** (Vascular myelopathies), **G95.2** (Cord compression (nontraumatic)), **G95.8** (Other specified diseases of spinal cord), and **G95.9** (Disease of spinal cord, unspecified) map to **HCC 182 with RAF 0.478**.<sup>2</sup>

**HCC/RAF V28:** G95.0, G95.11, G95.81, G95.89 and G95.9 map to HCC 182 with RAF 0.478.

**Prevalence:** Approximately 308,000 Americans are currently living with a chronic spinal cord injury. The annual cost per member per year (PMPY) is highly dependent on the Neurological Level of Injury (NLI) and the ASIA Impairment Scale (AIS) grade. For 2024–2025, subsequent annual costs ranged from approximately \$55,000 to over \$240,000.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. RECOGNITION AND DIAGNOSIS

### Medicare Screening/Diagnostic Workup

#### Key Diagnostic Features

Key Diagnostic Factors	Other Diagnostic Factors	Risk Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Motor weakness/paralysis</b></li> <li>● <b>Loss of sensation</b> (light touch, pain, temperature, vibration)</li> <li>● Loss of fine motor coordination</li> <li>● Spasticity</li> <li>● Paresthesia, numbness, dysesthesia</li> <li>● <b>Loss of bladder control</b> (Urinary incontinence)</li> <li>● <b>Loss of bowel control</b> (Fecal incontinence)</li> <li>● <b>Erectile dysfunction</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Central (midline) pain</li> <li>● Girdle pain</li> <li>● Musculoskeletal or visceral pain</li> <li>● Unsteady gait</li> <li>● <b>Changes in reflexes</b> (Hyper- or Hypo-reflexia)</li> <li>● <b>Back pain</b></li> <li>● Diminished sweating below the damaged area</li> <li>● Increased sweating above the damaged area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spinal cord trauma or ischemia</li> <li>● Higher-level spinal cord lesion</li> <li>● Extremes of age</li> <li>● Narrow spinal canal</li> </ul>

\*\*Bolted text for potential symptoms of cauda equina syndrome

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