



St. Elias Specialty Hospital
4800 Cordova Street, Anchorage AK 99503
info@st-eliashospital.com
(907) 561-3333

St. Elias Specialty Hospital Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1:

What is a Long-Term Acute Care Hospital (LTCH)?

Most patients are initially treated at a traditional hospital following an accident, surgery, traumatic or catastrophic illness. Sometimes patients may need further care before they are stable enough to go home or to a rehabilitation facility. Some people may have an underlying disease such as diabetes or heart disease, or they may be too medically fragile for discharge. This is where a long-term acute care hospital (LTCH) may be beneficial to help the patient bridge to the next level of care. Patients can come for several days to weeks until they are well enough to move to the next level of recovery. St. Elias considers itself to be the "bridge of care" between the hospital and often home.

Question 2:

How is an LTCH different from a hospital or nursing home?

Most patients stay in a traditional hospital an average of 4 to 5 days. The average stay in an LTCH is 25 days. LTCH's are not long term care facilities or nursing homes. LTCH patients are medically complex often require IV fluids, ventilators, cardiac monitors and are seen by a physician on a daily basis.

Question 3:

What types of diagnoses are treated at an LTCH?

The most common diagnoses treated at an LTCH include respiratory and cardiac failure, septicemia (systemic infection), head and spinal cord injury, stroke, kidney failure and wounds. Almost any diagnosis that is treated at a traditional hospital is also treated at an LTCH.

Question 4:

What specialized services are available at an LTCH?



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The interdisciplinary team at St. Elias is highly skilled at ventilator weaning and treating patients who have suffered a traumatic brain injury. In addition, the hospital has a very aggressive wound therapy team, as well as respiratory, speech, physical and occupational therapy programs. The full scope of services is supported by 24-hour pharmacy, laboratory, radiology, and special procedure room services. This allows the patient time to recover from life-threatening medical illnesses. Each patient is admitted with an individual care plan. The goal to discharge the patient with a care plan that will continue the path to wellness.

Question 5:

What type of specialists provide care at a long-term acute care hospital?

- Cardiologists
- Pulmonologists
- General Surgeons
- Infectious Disease
- Nephrologists
- Neurosurgeons
- Orthopedic Surgeons
- Otolaryngologist
- Podiatrists



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Question 6:

How is St. Elias Specialty Hospital different from a regular acute care hospital?

St. Elias patients have already been through any needed diagnostic and surgical procedures, and are going to require the level of care typically provided in a hospital for an extended period of time.

At St. Elias, a multi-disciplinary team develops an individual care plan for each patient. That team meets weekly to assess the patient's progress toward the goal of medical recovery.

We are focused on understanding and providing for the needs of our patients and the members of their support systems. The long-stay patient at St. Elias is not the exception, but the rule, and we have created an environment that is free of the distractions that exist in regular acute care hospitals. St. Elias does not have an emergency room, labor and delivery, or other departments not related to our mission.

Question 7:

How is St. Elias Specialty Hospital different from a nursing home?

St. Elias is a licensed acute care hospital and provides a level of care similar to a regular acute care hospital. For example, St. Elias services include daily physician visits, 24-hour nursing care, telemetry, ventilator/tracheostomy weaning, therapy and other medical services typically provided in an acute care hospital.

Although the expression "long-term care" usually refers to nursing homes and sometimes assisted living facilities, the "long-term" in LTACH/LTCH only serves to distinguish us from traditional acute care hospitals. LTACH/LTCHs are not intended to be a permanent placement. Our goal is to help the patient reach their highest level of wellness possible and to move them through the health care continuum. For many LTACH/LTCH patients this means - Home!



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Question 8:

If a loved one needs LTACH/LTCH services, what is the St. Elias admission process?

A patient is admitted to St. Elias from an acute care hospital.

The process usually involves a referral from the patient's physician either for LTACH/LTCH or specifically for St. Elias Specialty Hospital. The Case Manager or physician's office personnel can contact St. Elias for a clinical evaluation to determine whether LTACH/LTCH services are appropriate for the patient. When St. Elias is contacted, we will promptly dispatch a Nurse Liaison to visit the patient and/or family. Admission determination is then made by an Admission Team at St. Elias, based upon industry standard criteria and other influencing factors.

If the patient does meet criteria for admission to St. Elias, our Admissions Team will work with the referring physician, Case Managers, and the family to make arrangements for transfer to St. Elias.

If the patient's physician is not familiar with St. Elias and the services we offer, please contact the Nurse Liaison at (907) 565-2273. We will be happy to provide detailed information, conduct a tour of our hospital, and to answer any questions the physician or family may have.

Patients or families request referral by calling (907) 565-2273. We will assess your condition/options and then either arrange for admission or recommend a more appropriate level of care for your situation.

Question 9:

How are LTACH/LTCH services paid for?

St. Elias has contracts with numerous commercial insurance carriers. During the pre-admission evaluation process, the Admissions Director will verify benefits under one of these plans. If St. Elias does not have an existing agreement with the patient's insurer we are usually able to work with that insurer on a single case basis and reach an agreement for services to be provided.



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Question 10:
Are private patient rooms available?

Most of the patient rooms at St. Elias are very large private rooms with private baths.

Question 11:
Is it possible for a family member to stay overnight with a patient?

St. Elias recognizes the benefit in family participation in patient care. Upon request, administration will determine if overnight accommodations can be made.

Question 12:
What assistance is available at St. Elias Specialty Hospital for preparing for a patient's discharge?

A St. Elias Case Manager will assist with all hospital and post-discharge needs. For the convenience of our patients and families, we arrange for medical equipment needs, Home Health, and transportation.

If alternative levels of care (skilled nursing, inpatient rehabilitation, assisted living, etc.) or outpatient services (Dialysis, outpatient therapy, IV antibiotic therapy, etc) are needed, a St. Elias Case Manager will assist in identifying and evaluating available options. We also have a social worker who specializes in health care who is available to assist as needed.

Question 13:
What is a hospitalist, the type of physician who will be my physician while I am at St. Elias?

A Hospitalist is a type of physician who is specially trained to take care of patients who are hospitalized. Our Hospitalist are all Board Certified in either Internal Medicine or Family Practice. These physicians care for patients who have multiple complex medical problems. They have numerous years of hospital care experience and still practice at other Anchorage acute care hospitals as well. They are not intended to be a patient's long-term physician, but the Hospitalist will return the patient to the consulting physician or Primary Care physician upon discharge from St. Elias.