



SOUTH TEXAS  
REHABILITATION HOSPITAL

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**MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH**

An accident while driving his four-wheeler ATV in Matamoros changed Chris Johnson and his family's life. Chris was a RN working as Director of a dialysis center, and now he is re-learning to communicate and walk.

Johnson was traveling at a high speed and unfortunately, was not wearing a helmet and suffered a severe head injury. He underwent two brain surgeries, which according to his family were life threatening.

"The doctors rate a head trauma on a scale of 1 to 15. A "3" is brain dead and Chris is a "4", said his mother, Cinde Johnson. "He was not supposed to live through two brain surgeries, but he did. We are grateful to God's love and mercy."

After his recovery at an acute care hospital, Johnson was an in-patient at South Texas Rehabilitation Hospital for close to two months where he received physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. He continues to make progress as an out-patient.

"As soon as we met Chris and his family, we knew we could provide hope through rehabilitation and support from the STRH team without leaving Brownsville," said Jessie Eason Gonzales, CEO. "Frankly, Chris and his family were a source of hope and motivation for all of us."

"Every week I think about what the doctors said he would be like if he lived, and I guess that's why it brings such tears of joy to each of us," said Cinde Johnson. "I never had any idea the impact that a TBI would have on a person. Chris has had to learn so much all over again."

Unfortunately, Johnson is not alone. Every 23 seconds someone in the United States will sustain a traumatic brain injury and each year, 1.4 million Americans will sustain a brain injury. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) has also been referred to as the signature injury of the War in Iraq and Afghanistan. Soldiers have not been the only victims of TBI. ABC News Anchor Bob Woodruff sustained a serious brain injury as a result of improvised explosive device while on assignment.

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month. This year's campaign is focused on educating the public about this silent epidemic.

While Johnson's story is unfortunate, the good news is comprehensive rehabilitation is available in Brownsville. STRH has developed a specialized brain injury program to help patients like Johnson restore the greatest level of function and independence. Rehabilitation at STRH centers on an interdisciplinary team approach to care by a physiatrist (physician specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation); physical, occupational and respiratory therapists; speech and language pathologists; nurses; case managers and other professionals who work with patients to overcome obstacles and accomplish normal tasks of daily living.

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STRH invites you to take a tour and find out how in-patient rehabilitation can make a difference in the recovery of not only brain injury patients but patients who have suffered functional deficits from a debilitating illness or events such as amputation or stroke. Call us at 956.554.6000 or visit us on the web at [STRH.ernesthealth.com](http://STRH.ernesthealth.com).

STRH is part of a network of post-acute care facilities operated by Ernest Health, Inc., (EHI) an Albuquerque, New Mexico based healthcare provider specializing in the development and operation of rehabilitation and related post-acute healthcare facilities in rural and under-served areas. EHI operates other facilities in New Mexico, Texas, Idaho, Utah and Arizona has other facilities under construction in the Western regions of the United States.

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