

# The Value of Trauma Research

Research is essential to help The Gillian Reny Stepping Strong Center for Trauma Innovation save and improve lives affected by traumatic injury. Through research, practitioners in the field develop new treatments, gain a deeper understanding of injury mechanisms, identify risk factors, enhance long-term outcomes, and advocate for policy changes, turning innovative ideas into tangible solutions for survivors.

## WHAT IS "TRAUMA"?

Trauma or traumatic injury is severe or life-threatening bodily harm resulting from sudden intentional or unintentional exposure to an external force or substance. Examples include:



Motor Vehicle  
Crashes



Burns



Falls



Violence-  
Related Injuries



Drowning

## WHY FOCUS ON TRAUMATIC INJURY?

#1

Trauma is the leading cause of death for people 44 and younger

<2%

Trauma research receives less than 2% of federal funding

Early-stage trauma research often struggles to secure traditional funding, preventing promising ideas from advancing to experimentation and discovery. The Stepping Strong Innovator Awards and Stepping Strong Breakthrough Awards, seed grants for trauma research, were established to fulfill this need.

## OUR RESEARCH SPOTLIGHTS



### AI Tool Detects Patients at Risk for Intimate Partner Violence

#### **Prevention**

Using AI to identify victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) through radiological images and a patient's clinical history to provide resources and safety planning options, enabling IPV survivors to make decisions about their health and safety.



### Civilian Walking Blood Banks Save Lives from Traumatic Injury

#### **Treatment**

Establishing an emergency transfusion system for people to donate blood in real-time in one of the world's most remote and medically underserved regions, providing immediate access to lifesaving blood for those in critical need.



### Novel Nasal Spray Reduces Inflammation from Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury

#### **Recovery**

Developing a nasal spray therapy to reduce neuroinflammation and improve motor outcomes after a spinal cord injury, offering hope for restoring movement and function for trauma patients.

## THE NEED FOR INCREASED SUPPORT

Without funding, progress in trauma prevention, treatment, and recovery slows or halts. In 2025, the Stepping Strong Center received a record number of Stepping Strong Innovator Award applications—totaling \$4.3 million in funding requests. With three awards of \$100,000 each, the center funded less than 7% of these critical research proposals, underscoring the growing demand for investment in solutions for a variety of trauma-related issues, from individual care to whole healthcare systems.

## WITH YOUR HELP, TRAUMA RESEARCH CAN TRANSFORM CARE AND SAVE LIVES

Every dollar you invest becomes a powerful catalyst for change, accelerating the treatments and solutions that give trauma survivors new hope for better outcomes, helping them take back their futures.