

# The Epilepsy Clinic for Older Adults at Rush

The Epilepsy Clinic for Older Adults at Rush is a comprehensive subspecialty clinic that provides epilepsy patients 60 years and older with timely, accurate diagnoses, pharmacological assistance to best manage their disorder and social support resources and counseling. This clinic is the first of its kind in the Midwest dedicated to treating epilepsy in older adults, serving a population that is often not optimally treated.

The older adult population is the largest-growing cohort of epilepsy patients in the United States. One in four newly diagnosed patients is 65 and older, and that number is set to double by 2055. With the signs of epilepsy presenting in more subtle ways than in younger patients, older adults tend to be late- and mis-diagnosed. In addition, the geriatric population is often excluded from clinical trials because of age. Thus, this group is underrepresented and its clinical impressions from epilepsy are not well understood.

Suffering from more frequent seizures can lead to cognitive decline in older adult patients. We strive to provide them with as rapid a diagnosis as possible to control seizures and to stop, and hopefully reverse, cognitive decline. Once an accurate diagnosis is achieved, our pharmacologist assesses if every drug the patient is taking is necessary for clinical benefit, helps patients manage their existing drug interactions and adjusts the dosage to minimize side effects. We also provide patients with social support so that they and their caregivers can successfully navigate the challenges inherent in home epilepsy care.

## Who are ideal candidates for this clinic?

Patients with epilepsy 60 years and older. In particular, this would benefit patients with unexpected cognitive decline without clear indications for dementia who may be suspected of having epilepsy, older patients who have experienced a seizure for the first time and patients with longstanding epilepsy who wish to have more specialized care.

## Why should you refer your patients here?

**First-rate care:** The neurology and neurosurgery programs at Rush are ranked No. 4 in the nation and the best in the Midwest by *U.S. News & World Report*. Our geriatrics program is ranked 14th in the country.

**Epilepsy expertise:** The Rush Epilepsy Center is accredited as a Level 4 — the highest possible designation — by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers. This is awarded to epilepsy centers that offer the most advanced and comprehensive medical and psychosocial treatments, as well as innovative new treatment options.

**Unique care model:** The Epilepsy Clinic for Older Adults is the first of its kind in the Midwest, marshaling a wide range of institutional resources for this underserved population.

## Meet our team



**Rebecca O'Dwyer, MD**

Clinical expertise:

- Epilepsy and cognition
- Epilepsy and seizures in older adults



**Ryan Bougher, PharmD**

Clinical pharmacist

## Locations

### **Rush University Medical Center**

Professional Office Building

1725 W. Harrison St.

Suite 885

Chicago, IL 60612

**To learn more or refer a patient,  
please call (312) 942-5939.**



**Best in Illinois.  
No. 4 in the country.**



Excellence is just the beginning.

Learn more:  
[rush.edu/epilepsy-care](https://rush.edu/epilepsy-care)