

conformaMed® Cushions Aid Outcome Management

The success of a relatively new entrant in the wheelchair cushion market is nothing short of phenomenal. The conformaMed® cushions manufactured by Helvetia Development Company LLC, are gaining a lot of attention. Their success is due to the highly engineered and patented designs of the cushions and the fact that they are demonstrating superior performance both in terms of their pressure management and in providing very good postural stability.

Recent evaluations by a number of rehabilitation centers and rehab professionals, are showing a consistent pattern of outstanding pressure reduction by means of cushions that actually mold themselves to their patients shape and support them with a very sophisticated system of suspension and positioning components. A recent patient evaluation at a leading rehabilitation and spinal cord injury center has shown that the peak pressures demonstrated with the conformaMed model 7000 cushions (E2607 & E2608) is showing pressure readings equal to and usually lower than the leading air and gel cushions. This was a surprise to the staff as they had been led to believe that the air and gel cushions will almost always result in lower peak pressure. This finding has been born out by numerous PT's etc. from around the country.

As the patient evaluations are finished at the leading rehabilitation centers around the country, a pattern is emerging. Generally, the conformaMed cushions are demonstrating superior pressure mapping to the competitive products in over 80% of the evaluations. In over 65 to 70% of the evaluations, the patients are choosing the conformaMed cushions over the competitive products. The patients are saying that the new cushions offer better long-term comfort and enhanced postural stability.

One supplier organization to the Durable Medical Equipment market has recently completed internal tests to determine the efficacy of the conformaMed cushions. This company reported last year that their studies have shown "Superior long-term comfort, postural stability and a cushion that is cooler for the patient than the leading Gel, Air and similar products."

The ultimate success of the products comes from the satisfied referrals and endorsements of the patients who ultimately use the products. One such case is Gary Baker who has given the conformaMed 7000 cushions a thorough evaluation.

Gary is a Mobility Specialist for the Community Hospital Network in central Indiana. He is indeed a specialist, given that Gary is a spinal cord injury patient and has been in a wheelchair for over 18 years. Gary's credentials include being an industrial engineer, a past participant in the US Olympic Wheelchair Racquetball Team and he is presently very active with wheeling in marathons, etc. Gary has been putting the cushions through their paces over the last several months and finds the cushion very accommodating to his needs. Gary is very impressed with the low weight, and the unique manner in which the cushions accommodate his pelvic obliquity.

Gary recently went on an extended trip and used the conformaMed cushions exclusively for over 14 hours per day without incident. In fact, he had the same results day after day for over a week. Gary has stated that none of the competitive cushions he uses offers this capability and level of performance.

Gary has stated that he wants his peers to learn of the conformaMed cushions. He says it is important that his peers, many of who deal with the same issues he lives with, have access to the same technology available to him.

A lot of time and effort have gone into developing the conformaMed product line states Thomas Mollet, CEO of Helvetia Development Company LLC. The initial goal of management was to build a successful alternative to the usual Gel and air designs so prevalent in the market today. The desire to achieve such a lofty goal was borne out of their past experiences in medicine and material dynamics. Over the course of 65 years of combined medical knowledge, and 10 ½ years of research, they found a clear and present need to develop an alternative to the mainstream products offered today. Too often in their professional careers, they have heard various medical professionals and their patients disclose their displeasure with the status quo seating products offered.

The conformaMed product line encompasses a line of cushions that have been developed to accommodate a wide variety of patients ranging from the patient with low back-pain to those patients that deal with the outcomes of spinal cord injury, head trauma, etc. Darryl Kaelin MD, a rehabilitation specialist, finds the range of performance is very impressive. Dr. Kaelin is an associate professor of Rehabilitation Medicine at Indiana University and has been a very early supporter of the conformaMed concepts. Dr. Kaelin wrote the medical/usage recommendations that appear on the various product sheets to help caregivers understand the potential benefits of a featured cushion for a particular patient population.

Dr. Kaelin is very concerned about patient care and providing cost-effective patient outcomes. He finds for example that most patients that need a substantial amount of pressure management, do not need a \$400 cushion. He is very impressed that Helvetia Development Company LLC offers a cushion that is so good, that its performance is almost as good as the top Gel and air cushions, and it carries half the cost.

During the last several years, numerous comments are surfacing from long-term wheelchair patients, top practitioners, etc. who are witnessing a significant increase in the numbers of patients who are having secondary medical complications due to the improper designs of certain types of wheelchair cushions. This translates into a significant amount of patient discomfort and pain as well as skyrocketing healthcare costs that are being born by the taxpayers. The success of the conformaMed cushions is demonstrating a significant trend in lowering the costs associated with treating patients with the potential for pressure sores and is definitely showing dividends in reducing and in recent studies preventing the reoccurrence of pressure sores common with many long-term patients. With recent cost estimates of \$85,000 to over \$150,000 associated with treating reoccurring pressure wounds, the conformaMed cushions are showing significant promise in improving patient outcomes and reducing the reoccurring medical complications to the patients and the associated costs.

The company seems very realistic about their products and their capabilities. They will readily admit that their cushions cannot be all things to all people. However, they feel that what is being discovered by numerous independent evaluations from around the country, is that they have developed a series of products that benefit a majority of the patient needs and offer a cost effective approach to the wheelchair cushion market.