

News

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Revolutionary New Patient Repositioning System Expected to Transform the Hospital Experience for Patients and Their Caregivers

Introducing The Hercules Patient Repositioner™ - Designed to Transform the Patient Repositioning Experience, Eliminate Caregiver Injuries and Improve Patient Outcomes

Developer Bill Hillenbrand believes Hercules will become The New Standard of Care in Patient Repositioning

BATESVILLE, Ind. — Since its introduction to the marketplace, [The Hercules Patient Repositioner](#) has been heralded as a medical breakthrough that's transforming the repositioning experience for patients and caregivers alike.

In fact, following a recent product study at one of the nation's top hospital systems—The Christ Hospital Health Network in Cincinnati, Ohio—The Hercules Patient Repositioner received glowing reviews from patients and caregivers for its ease of use and ability to dramatically improve the way nurses care for their patients.

"We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to The Hercules Patient Repositioner," said Deborah Hayes, Vice President and COO/CNO, The Christ Hospital Health Network. "By working with The Morel Company, we've been able to help bring a product to market that will have an enduring, positive impact for caregivers and patients alike. Improving the value of services is key to the transformation of care delivery. The Hercules Patient Repositioner is an innovative product that will help providers to accomplish that goal."

The system is something medical professionals have needed for a long time, and it comes courtesy of inventor and entrepreneur, Bill Hillenbrand, who, like his grandfather before him, is a medical pioneer who saw a legitimate need and set about designing a solution that would combine safety and clinical advantages with compassionate patient care. "I share my grandfather's passion and vision for developing innovative products and solutions that solve patient and caregiver problems, which, in this case, relates to the century-old challenge of pulling a patient up in bed," said Hillenbrand.

In today's challenging healthcare environment, Hillenbrand says the many benefits Hercules delivers align with the value-based objectives acute care hospitals are striving to achieve. "It brings safety, clinical advantages and patient care together in one simple, easy to use solution." It's a combination medical professionals are applauding and for good reason.

The Patient Repositioning Challenge – Did You Know

Out of the following professions: construction, mining, manufacturing or nursing, which would you say has the highest incident rate of musculoskeletal injuries? As implausible as it may sound, if you guessed nursing, you'd be right.

In fact, according to [The Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), every year, more than 35,000 nurses and nurse aides suffer on-the-job back, neck and shoulder injuries, primarily due to heavy manual lifting when repositioning or transferring patients. That's roughly three times the rate of musculoskeletal injuries reported among construction workers. The primary reason the number is so high is because when gravity causes [a patient to slide down in bed](#), they're not only uncomfortable, but they're also at a greater risk for developing pressure ulcers or bed sores as they're more commonly called. To help prevent this from occurring, patients are often repositioned as many as 10 to 20 times each day.

A Century Old Problem

Medical equipment manufacturers have been attempting to solve this problem for more than a century. While it may sound relatively simple, Hillenbrand says finding an effective solution has been anything but easy. Through the years, a number of products ranging from draw sheets and slide sheets to patient lifts have been introduced, but each has had its drawbacks and not one has solved the problem.

Manual Repositioning – The Alarming Truth

Moving patients manually, including the traditional two-person draw sheet repositioning technique, continues to be the most widely used method in hospitals today. However, despite industry guidelines and safety training designed to reduce injuries, the statistics remain serious and alarming:

- Back injuries in the healthcare industry cost an estimated [\\$7.4 billion annually](#).
- [80 percent of nurses](#) with neck, back or shoulder injuries sustained on the job continue to work despite the pain.

The problem's become so pervasive that the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#) now recommends that healthcare workers should move and lift no more than 35 pounds of a person's body weight.

Patient Lifts – Cumbersome and Disruptive

Even with patient lifts, multiple caregivers are still needed to move the cumbersome pieces of equipment into position and 'log roll' the patient into the sling, all of which diverts time and energy from the caregivers' primary responsibilities. What's more, the arduous process is embarrassing, inconvenient and disruptive for the patient. Combined, these reasons are why lifts are seldom used to reposition a patient up in bed.

Drawbacks of Traditional Repositioning Methods

Most industry experts acknowledge that there's a problem and even concede that existing repositioning protocols are flawed. In fact, Dr William Marras, Director of Ohio State University's Spine Research Institute and a leading researcher in the field of Body Mechanics says "[there's no safe way to lift a patient manually](#)." Marras' comments were part of a recent National Public Radio (NPR) series on [Injured Nurses](#) which concluded that the problem is real and persists.

Hillenbrand concurs and says there are three distinct groups that are negatively impacted by this everyday occurrence:

1. Patients are adversely affected as traditional methods of repositioning are inconvenient, disruptive, often painful and without concern for the patient's dignity. Because patients are often only repositioned when they've migrated all the way down in bed, vulnerable areas of the body are at risk, increasing the potential for the development of pressure ulcers (bed sores).
2. Caregivers suffer because they often have to reposition a single patient 10 to 20 times per day, increasing the likelihood of neck, back and shoulder injuries.
3. Hospital Administrations pay a price too. Increased hospital-acquired pressure ulcers, lost productivity and increases in on-the-job injuries all have a negative impact on financial results and employee morale.

The Hercules Difference

"Quite simply, we created [The Hercules Patient Repositioning System](#) to provide caregivers with a safer work environment and positively impact the patient's experience and outcomes," said Hillenbrand. Designed with simplicity in mind and with the ability to fit on virtually any healthcare bed, Hercules is comprised of [three components](#):

1. An automated drive unit
2. A therapeutic sleep surface (mattress)
3. A specialized sheet

The system automates the repositioning of the patient using the specialized sheet, which is twice as long as a standard sheet, allowing for up to 10 repositionings per use. It operates much like a conveyor, allowing a single caregiver to reposition a patient up in bed with the simple push of a button. One of the system's greatest benefits is that Hercules allows a single caregiver to reposition a patient every time they walk into the room. So, a previously challenging task that would require multiple caregivers and up to 20 minutes now only takes one caregiver less than 10 seconds to reposition a patient. Hercules also:

Supports Clinical Outcomes

- Because the sheet moves with the patient, any friction that can cause skin shear or tears is virtually eliminated.
- The patient can be kept up in bed more frequently in a lower pressure position, decreasing the potential of pressure ulcer (bed sore) development.
- Because Hercules allows repositioning with the head of bed raised, ventilator, COPD and tube-fed patients can be repositioned more safely and effectively.

Improves Caregiver Safety and Efficiency

- With the simple press of a button, patients weighing up to 750 pounds, can be repositioned by one caregiver in less than 10 seconds, eliminating manual lifting and pulling that can cause back, neck and shoulder injuries.
- Enhances the Patient Experience
- The Hercules Patient Repositioner allows for a smooth and comfortable repositioning without disruption to the patient.
- It protects a patient's dignity by reducing the embarrassing and helpless feelings that can be associated with traditional repositioning.

Hercules was designed to benefit many different patient populations. In addition to immobile, post-surgical and bariatric patients, Hillenbrand says [hospital customers are also reporting](#) that they're realizing significant benefits from using the system with other populations like oncology, palliative care and rehabilitation patients.

Clinical Evaluation – Proof of Concept

"From the very beginning, we knew it was essential to have caregivers and patients involved in testing," said Hillenbrand. "We were fortunate enough to find a partner in The Christ Hospital Health Network, which allowed us to complete the development of the product using valuable feedback obtained from actual patients and caregivers."

"We tout Hercules as an innovative product that greatly assists us in our daily mission of improving the health of our community and creating patient value by providing exceptional outcomes, affordable care and the finest experiences," said Caroline Pritchard, RN, MSN, Clinical Nurse Specialist at The Christ Hospital Health Network.

Pritchard, who directed the study for the hospital, added, "Since purchasing the Hercules system, The Christ Hospital has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from patients and caregivers using the product. Hercules has helped caregivers continue to transform care and improve the patient experience by allowing us to reposition a patient easily without risk of injury to the caregiver or the patient."

Now Available Nationwide

The Morel Company began shipping Hercules Patient Repositioning Systems to hospitals in early 2014 and has product installed at 13 hospitals in eight states. Recently, to expand the Hercules solution throughout the U.S., The Morel Company entered into a strategic agreement with Sizewise, a privately held, leading medical equipment manufacturer that rents and sells a wide range of standard, pediatric, bariatric and mobility products. The Sizewise national sales and distribution network means hospitals across the country will now have convenient access to rent or purchase the product for bariatric frames. "We are excited to enter into this partnership," said Hillenbrand. "Hercules is ideal for the bariatric population, and we look forward to making a positive impact on this growing segment of the healthcare market."

In these turbulent healthcare times, Hillenbrand sees The Morel Company and its innovative Hercules product creating a new standard of care that he believes will change healthcare forever. "By leveraging the experience, dedication and passion of talented local people, The Morel Company is establishing a culture and a solid foundation that will continue to deliver innovative products and outstanding customer service to patients and caregivers for decades to come," said Hillenbrand.

About The Morel Company

The Morel Company is privately owned and is headquartered in Batesville, Ind. It was founded in 2011 to help solve the longstanding and difficult challenges associated with patient repositioning. Founder, President and CEO, Bill Hillenbrand, is the inventor of The Hercules Patient Repositioning System, which was recognized internationally as a Medical Design Excellence Award winner in 2014.

For more information about The Morel Company and its products visit www.morelcompany.com.

Hercules Video: <http://morelcompany.com/hercules/hercules-video/>

Clinical Video: <http://morelcompany.com/hercules/clinical-video/>

Customer Testimonial Videos: <http://morelcompany.com/endorsements/>

Hercules Photos: <http://flickr.com>

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