

# Technology reshapes incontinence, skin, wound care

BY JOHN ANDREWS, Contributing Editor

TECHNOLOGY MAY not be the first word that springs to mind in reference to the incontinence, skin and wound care market, but perhaps its time that it became the focus. Innovations in connected care and therapeutic materials are becoming more prominent in the category and offer viable applications for HME providers.

## CATEGORY

### Incontinence, skin and wound care

#### NEW APPROACH

■ **Incontinence alternative:** New wearable electronic technology is allowing for bladder function to be monitored via ultrasound. Though the product is very new and performance data is still being evaluated, the product could augment an HME provider's cash sales business in the category.

#### FEELING FABRIC

■ **Spinning yarn:** Sophisticated new materials are making inroads in the skin care market as attention to wound prevention and non-compression garments give HME providers a potential new product line for retail sales.

#### CATHETER KEY

■ **Find a balance:** By understanding their client base and offering quality products, quality education and quality service, HME providers can build a strong reputation as a go-to source in the catheter market.

One option for the incontinence segment just launched in September: the DFree portable bladder monitor from San Diego-based Triple W. The wearable product detects bladder volume levels and notifies the patient when it is time to go to the bathroom.

Ty Takayanagi, vice president of marketing and business development for the company, says the product came about as an alternative to conventional garments and implants.

"There isn't a solution besides pads, or diapers and implants on the other end of the spectrum, but those are invasive," he said. "We developed a noninvasive product."

DFree (which stands for Diaper Free) uses an ultrasound sensor to monitor the bladder around the clock. A sensor the size of a quarter is secured to the lower abdomen using medical tape and uses ultrasound to monitor the change in bladder size. Using Bluetooth, notification is then sent to a smartphone or tablet used by the patient or caregiver to inform them when the bladder is getting full.

"This is the first wearable device for incontinence," Takayanagi said. "It is very discreet. The patient can set the bladder level on a scale of zero to 10, with zero being empty and 10 being completely full."

Triple W is looking at HME providers as a primary sales outlet for the DFree product. The sales hook, he says, is to reduce the burden of care for family caregivers and lower costs overall for incontinence care.

For now, the company is furnishing the product on consignment through the HME retail sales channel "because we are very new and some retailers have questions about its performance," Takayanagi said. "So we will

send a display unit and drop ship any orders that come through them."

If sales take off and the provider wants to carry some inventory, Takayanagi said the company is open to establishing a more comprehensive relationship.

Although based in California for the U.S. market, Triple W is a global company and has introduced the DFree in 500 senior care facilities in Europe. It is also test marketing the product in two senior care facilities in California, Takayanagi said.

#### YARN TECHNOLOGY

Advances in apparel—notably more sophisticated materials—help protect patients with sensitive skin for wound prevention and greater comfort, said Deborah Vezan, president and owner of Limbkeepers in New London/Norwich, Conn. Through yarn technology comprised of polypropylene and CoolMax polyester fabric, Limbkeepers knits arm and leg sleeves and gloves to help protect fragile, thin skin on arms, hands and legs to prevent skin tears, abrasion, bruising and injury from impact, Vezan said.

"Our non-compression limb protectors provide seamless, form fitting, cushioned comfort and can be easily worn under apparel without bulk," she said. "Our blend of high-performance yarns make a cushioned form-fitting sleeve without compression. The rebound stretch keeps these sleeves from sliding down and helps retain their shape."

The Limbkeepers line is produced for retail sale and all products are reusable, Vezan said.

"They are not coded for insurance," she said. "Our reasonable and affordable prices were a deliberate decision when we launched five-and-a-half years ago. We have many wound care departments making referrals of our products to their patients once they have

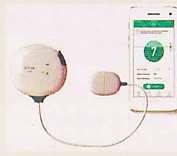
## Incontinence

### Triple W

#### DFREE

- Monitors bladder using ultrasound.
- Receive notification on phone when bladder is full.
- Non-invasive and safe.

[www.dfreeus.biz](http://www.dfreeus.biz)



### Cure Medical

#### CURE HYDROPHILIC KIT

- Contains a hydrophilic Cure catheter, ambidextrous gloves, BZK wipe, underpad, and collection bag with universal connector.
- Does not kink; not made with Proposition 65 chemicals DEHP/DINP, BPA or NR-latex.
- Reimbursement-friendly, quality-made; FR sizes 12-16; HCPC A4353.

[www.curemedical.com](http://www.curemedical.com)

healed or the wounds are no longer open." The products are sold for home use, as well as various post-acute care facilities.

#### MASTERING CATHETERS

Becoming adept at catheter provision also relies on technology, though it's more related to service than anything else, says John Anderson, CEO of Newport Beach, Calif.-based Cure Medical.

"Customers want a seamless experience from start to finish," he said. "That includes on-time delivery and quality products that meet expectations every time. I believe customers do not spend time changing products and deliveries with provider services that work, so a happy customer is yours to keep."

Information technology plays a key role in

## Wound care

### Limbkeepers

#### LIMBKEEPERS

- Non-compression seamless design protects vulnerable newly healed skin.
- Made with latex-free, moisture management, and silver infused antimicrobial yarns.
- Made to look like everyday apparel.



### Drive DeVilbiss Healthcare

#### MED-AIRE PLUS 8" ALTERNATING PRESSURE AND LOW AIR LOSS MATTRESS

- Combination therapy ideal for pressure redistribution, microclimate control.
- For use in home or long-term care setting.
- Cell-on-cell design prevents bottoming out, provides 24-hour power outage protection.

[www.drivemedical.com](http://www.drivemedical.com)

understanding the customer base from the standpoint of what they want from a product and provider, Anderson said.

"Online research is widely used now by end users, so just having lists of part numbers on your site no longer works," he said. "Customers want to see how products offer real solutions to real people. We know firsthand that many of our customers are using social media along with search engine results to find the right solution that fits their individual needs."

HME providers can position themselves as the go-to source for catheters by offering "quality products, quality education and quality service," Anderson said. "There will always be companies that don't offer quality in all areas and their audience is your future customer base." HME



Due to the cancellation of this year's HME News Business Summit, we are bringing some of the sessions to you in our new Summit Talks Webcast Series!

Wednesday, January 9, 2 pm ET

## The competition: The anti-Amazon approach to beating Amazon

So many healthcare businesses are obsessed with the "Amazon effect." And with good reason: the giant e-tailer has made a number of moves in the healthcare space, including teaming up with JP Morgan Chase and Berkshire Hathaway on a yet-to-be disclosed initiative, securing approval as a wholesale distributor in numerous states and offering a Prime discount for Medicaid recipients. But where others see the apocalypse, Justin Racine sees opportunity. In this webcast, you will learn the "anti-Amazon" approach and how, by leveraging your unique experience and knowledge to create something it could never replicate, you can keep the e-tailer's hands off your customers.

#### Presenter:



**Justin Racine**  
Director of marketing and eCommerce, Geriatric Medical

#### Moderator:



**Liz Beaulieu**  
Editor, HME News

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