



BESPOKE PLUS

"Pushing to be Better, Faster, and Stronger"

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*World Institute on
Disability*

*WID's vision is
that culture,
laws, policies,
perceptions and
customs in the
world reflect the
full inclusion of
all people,
including those
with disabilities*

*Wheelchair users
often cannot
afford to pay for
wheelchairs, so
government
agencies,
development
organizations,
and charitable
and religious
institutions act as
consumers
instead.*



World Institute on Disability

DisabilityWorld is a unique international online magazine (e-zine), dedicated to advancing an exchange of information and expertise about the international independent living movement of people with disabilities. Published by the World Institute on Disability (WID) since 2000, it features a wide variety of news reports, international studies and research, new projects, interviews, book and film reviews, etc. Since 2005, *DisabilityWorld* has had a focus on initiatives and activities to improve the status of the estimated 400 million children, youth and adults with disabilities living in poor countries.

Usual Market Forces are Absent

I have had the good fortune of meeting a significant number of occupational (OT) and physio therapists (PT) both from the perspective of someone benefiting from their services after an injury and conversely as a manufacturer to a prescribing authority. In the majority of encounters I have come away learning something new, picked up another perspective, and felt that there was reciprocity. But, every once in a while I run into someone that tries hard to sell a product that is not asked for and emphatically denies the benefits of something they either do not know about or do not have an interest in.

Recently, I had an experience where the objective third party prescribing authority came off as anything but objective and was adamant that a particular cushion was the only one for her patient! I found myself picking up firstly on the latter part indicating that the individual in question had not been a patient for 20 years and was simply speaking to the OT out of necessity to enable him to receive partial funding for the product that he wanted. Therein lies the rub, the problem, the person that needs the product has to rely on someone else to sign a piece of paper so they can get it. The prescribing authority becomes the consumer to a large degree because they are not only the gatekeeper for the funding agency, but they are viewed as the consumer by the vendor and manufacture because their signature is needed; the vendor and manufacturer feel obligated to cater to the prescribing authority or they may not see another prescription completed by that person! So, who gets less attention? The user of the product! In most industries this is the person being catered to and thus naturally becomes an integral part of the design, production, and selection process instead of a passive recipient of a charitable giving initiative disguised as a program to provide the tools required for independent living!

In the 70's and early 80's as your friendly neighborhood social worker I would make value judgments on an individuals ability to handle public funds; if there was doubt in my mind that a cheque would not put food on the table or pay the rent, a voucher for both would be issued. This is not an acceptable practice today because the value judgment may be wrong or the action may have a negative impact on the personal development of the person applying for the service; today, there would have to be extreme issues for a voucher to be issued as we are more in tune with dignity/feelings of the recipient. A comparison may be drawn to the situation we have with funding being

When the usual market forces of consumer-based supply and demand are absent, end users become disenfranchised from the design, production and selection processes!

True Fiascal

Canadian Women passed up again for team of the year ... that one loss since 1990 has had a tremendous negative impact on their ability to be viewed as the team of the year ... ditto for Coach Frick!

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provided by some agencies to people with a disability. When agencies focus their attention on the product instead of the end users, the distribution of wheelchairs and other products takes precedence over the socio-economic integration of people with disabilities into their communities.

Furthermore, when the duty of a prescribing authority is clouded with personal or private interests, there is a conflict of interest. This can be perceived or real, but just as damaging in either case and should be of paramount importance to any/all funding agencies; certainly important enough to have a conflict of interest policy, a code of conduct for people involved in the process, and procedures for the expulsion of those that erode public confidence in the integrity of the profession and the organization they represent. Conflicts of interest occur frequently in industry, but may not be unethical or wrong; what is wrong is how they are identified and managed. Do prescribing authorities need a code of conduct?

RGK UK Factory Updates



The RGK factory in the UK relays that recent testing has been completed on leather and they will make a change from sheep to cow hide effective immediately. The maximum camber allowed with a titanium camber bar on a Maxima, Hi-Lite, and M2 Kids chair will be three degrees with a 25 mm wheel gap. Also, all solid puncture proof tires in the future will be supplied with BLACK color only. In North America we will continue to offer after market tires which come from Green Tyre, MBL, and KIK, with the latter being a full stock in multiple colors for most rim types.

Welcome On Board Mike

We welcome Mike Fricker on board with us as of March 01, 2007. With eighteen years experience in the Home Medical Equipment installation, delivery, sales, management, and manufacturing field, he is a welcome addition to assist us in our educational goals, marketing and promotions of Varilite® and Kenda brands in the province of Ontario. Mike has a high quality, value-oriented, educator-trainer approach to what he does and he is committed to meeting the needs of the end user of our products.

Bits and Bytes

- 2nd Annual Canadian Assistive Devices Association (CADA) Conference Shoppers Home Health Care Conference Ctr., in TO May 07;
- True Sport Foundation shuts out athletes/coaches with a disability ... more to come on this in the next issue;
- Wheelchair Curling Nationals in Ottawa April 7-11;
- CWBL Finals Quebec City April 6-8;
- NWBT and Hall of Fame March 29-31 in Lexington, KY.

BESPOKE PLUS helps to market and promote **RGK Wheelchairs**, **VARILITE®** Seating and Positioning Systems, **KENDA** Tires, **SPINERGY** and **GLANCE** Wheels, and other products; back issues on www.4RGK.com .

If you have something that you think we should be expounding on, please contact the editor, Reg McClellan.