

Maximum Accessibility



March 2011

How to Choose the Right Wheelchair and Medical Equipment Company

It is no secret that choosing a good durable medical equipment vendor can be a daunting task. Knowing just a few simple things can make the search for a competent rehab provider much easier.

The first thing to remember is that the process of obtaining a manual or power wheelchair funded through Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance carriers should always start with the physician or PT/OT clinician.

Wheelchairs are sold over the internet, television and even in magazines. To the average person, they all appear the same, however wheelchairs should be chosen like shoes. Their function and fit are the foremost reasons in the decision making. Medicare, Blue Cross and most other insurances or assistive funds have set guidelines that require that the wheelchair meets medical necessity reasons. Be wary of companies that make promises that sound too good to be true regarding what you really need for mobility. It is easy to be enticed by fashion, flash and the freedom of powered mobility, when medically you don't really need it yet.

When the medical necessity for ambulatory or mobility products is needed, consult with a resource that specializes in mobility solutions. Simply picking a walker or wheelchair in a box off a shelf will probably not meet all your needs. Do the footrests swing away for ease of getting in and out of the chair? Are the armrests the right length to allow you to pull up to the dinner table to let you eat over your plate? Is the seat wide enough to avoid causing pressure sores? Is the seat depth correct to allow you to sit far enough back and not make the chair front heavy? Is the seat depth short enough that the seat doesn't hit the back of your knees and interfere with blood circulation? Those are just a few of the questions that a seating specialist takes into account when evaluating you for a wheelchair, and we haven't even touched on the cushion, back or style of wheelchair.

Another thing to consider when choosing your medical equipment supplier is the range of products they offer. Are they able to help with the basic changes in your daily living due to limited mobility? From bath and kitchen assistive devices, to ramps and vehicle mobility, as well as incontinent supplies, will you be able to work with just one company that gets to know you and your home? Doing business with a company that is accredited, helpful and there when needed are priorities to consider in order for anyone to live safely and confidently in their chosen home.

March is:

National Nutrition Month
Red Cross Month
Social Worker's Month
Women's History Month
Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
Umbrella Month
Peanut Month
Noodle Month
Mirth Month
Spring Month
Hoops Madness
Poetry Month
Umbrella Month
Red Cross Month
Youth Art Month

Academy Awards Month
Ethics Awareness Month
Help Someone See Month
Social Worker's Month
Women's History Month
National Nutrition Month
Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month
Honor Society Awareness Month
Humorists Are Artists Month
International Listening Awareness Month
International Mirth Month
Irish-American Heritage Month
Music in Our Schools Month
National Collision Awareness Month

National Craft Month
National Kite Month
National Nutrition Month
Optimism Month
Play the Recorder Month
Poison Prevention Awareness Month



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

CANOPIES

Have you ever been outside in the hot sun or pouring rain wishing you had an umbrella to block the sun? We can help fix the problem with Wheelchair Canopies. Available in adult or child sizes and with three different styles and many different colors to choose from outdoor activities will be much more comfortable. The three styles are Basic, Vented, and Max Protection.



The Basic canopy features fabric on the sides, top and back for protection from the sun.



The Vented Canopy has fabric on the top and mesh on the sides and rear back window (with removable cover). The mesh increases ventilation and visibility.

The Max Protection Canopy has everything the vented model does plus a drop over side plastic enclosure for full protection from the weather.



Call Wheelchairs Plus and we will special order the canopy that fits you!

Therapeutic Horseback Riding

A therapeutic riding program teaches a person with a disability more than how to ride a horse. Working with horses goes beyond riding skills as participants can also learn companionship, responsibility, confidence, leadership, vocational and educational skills. It may also offer competition venues in various riding disciplines. Riding a horse provides a unique, sometimes profound, recreational or leisure activity for many. There are many sports in which the disabled can participate in to enhance their lives and attain social and physical fitness (such as the Special Olympic programs, for people with cognitive disabilities). Hundreds of programs (and many organizations) exist worldwide which are dedicated to horseback riding or horse care in the context of a cognitive or other disability.

A person who interacts with his or her horse may extend this interaction to others and form meaningful relationships with people. Building a relationship with an animal is very rewarding in many respects; for a person with an emotional, social or psychological disability, the trust and loyalty of an animal demonstrates to the student how important he or she is; they

may then apply this newly-acquired self-esteem to personal relationships. A horse may also help a person feel in control of his or her situation. In dealing with horses there is a direct relationship between action and reaction. To learn how to care for (and ride) a horse, a person must also be able to communicate effectively with both horse and instructor. In this way riding is a social activity, but may be less daunting to those uncomfortable in social situations. Riding a horse is also a unique experience and it helps empower a person and enable them to connect with others on a personal level. The sometimes-unpredictable nature of animals and situations also creates a real-life skills environment in which a student can confront his or her fears, and adjust to situations beyond their control.

In the Wheelchairs Plus service area there are three therapeutic riding stables. They are the Forget-Me-Not Foundation of Nashwauk, North Country Ride of Esko, and Project Astride of St. Cloud. Call Laurie at Wheelchairs Plus at 1-800-400-1833 for website information.

Employee Spotlight

Cindy Ridley, Administrative Assistant, was born in Litchfield, MN and moved to northern MN when she was 5 years old. She worked in the office of a wood manufacturing plant outside of Grand Rapids for 19 years then decided to move on and worked for Blandin Wood Products in the sales department for 2 years until they were bought out by Potlatch. By then she had met Jim and married in 1992.

Cindy and Jim moved to Blaine, MN where they lived for 10 years. They have 3 wonderful daughters, 8 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. The most recent great-grandson was born 2-7-11. While living in Blaine, Cindy worked in customer service for 2 years and then moved on to be the accounting clerk for Medical Arts Press (a printing company for the medical profession).



When her mother died in 2000 Cindy and Jim decided to move back to Grand Rapids to be closer to her father. She got a job as a bank teller and an office clerk at a machining company before joining Wheelchairs Plus. She was hired as receptionist but quickly moved from receptionist to accounting and processing then on to authorization specialist and then to her present title of administrative assistant.

Jim is a retired auto technician and laughingly says it's the best job he has ever had and although he does some part time auto repairs at home to keep busy, he can't wait for Cindy to retire so they can travel with their 5th wheel camper.

Cindy spends her spare time knitting, crocheting, watching movies, and of course camping in the 5th wheeler. She spends as much time as possible with her grand and great grand kids. She also travels to Seattle Washington to visit her only sister and her husband and kids.

Cindy says that the best part of her day at Wheelchairs Plus is hearing the joy and excitement in clients voices when they know they are receiving their new wheelchair or equipment. Knowing I was a part of the process in providing their equipment.



Roll Call

In 1992 my 6 year old nephew and I were having a great day shopping together when I noticed his little face was flushed. I checked his temperature with the back of my hand and thought he might have a fever. So we hurriedly checked out and loaded our bags in the car. I buckled him in and drove off to bring him home.

After I dropped him at home I realized that I had left my purse in the cart in the store parking lot. With my heart in my throat I raced back to the store only to find the cart I had used was empty. I panicked! I had been out of work on medical and just the day before I received a check for back pay of \$2500.00 that I cashed at the bank. That meant I had close to that amount in my purse and

my purse was GONE! I raced back to my sisters to call the police department (I had no cell phone back then) praying the whole time that someone turned it in. Through my tears I described my purse and contents inside to the dispatch and wouldn't you know it a kind lady had found my purse and dropped it at the police department with everything still inside. I was ecstatic and did happy joy-joy dances around the room. I went directly to pick up my purse and it was then that I found out that wonderful woman did not leave her name. I am thankful for this opportunity to say "Thank You". You will never know how truly grateful I am.

Wheelchairs Plus

LOCATIONS

St. Cloud

65 3rd St NE
Waite Park, MN 56387

Toll Free 877-882-7700
Phone 320-259-7700
Fax 866-454-6960

Bemidji 218-755-5079

Grand Rapids

502 SE 10th ST
Grand Rapids MN 55744

Toll Free 800-400-1833
Phone 218-326-1833
Fax 866-454-6960

Duluth 218-623-1028



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Grand Rapids MN 55744