

## Kaiser Permanente's Transport Team Prefers Zoom®

### Situation

In 2001, the leadership at Kaiser Permanente — Santa Teresa in San Jose, California, tasked its Labor Management Partnership Group to reduce workplace injury by 50%, recognizing that patient handling injuries constituted the largest instance of Kaiser's total workplace injuries. Kaiser discovered that one of the causes of these injuries was the mismatch between transport equipment and facility flooring. Kaiser personnel were transporting patients on outdated stretchers over carpeted surfaces, which resulted in an increased number of complaints relative to the difficulty of pushing and steering stretchers on this type of surface.

This challenge, coupled with the growing distance of transports with larger patients forced Kaiser to double its transport efforts by requiring two people for every patient transport. In order to increase staff safety and efficiency as well as the overall patient experience, Kaiser sought a technology that would allow one person to safely transport most patients and therefore help reduce the risk of workplace injury.

### Rationale

As an industry leader in patient handling equipment for more than 60 years, Stryker Medical recognized that job-related injuries are a major concern. Acknowledging this need, Stryker was first to market with a motorized stretcher. Launched in 2003, this self-propelled stretcher helps ease pushing and turning effort for the caregiver. Exclusive ergonomic features such as a lift-assist backrest with drop-seat design, no-crank hydraulic knee gatch, integrated patient scales, litter-mounted O<sub>2</sub> bottle holder, 700 lbs weight capacity and best-in-class low height make Stryker stretchers benchmarks in the industry.

### Methodology

Stryker designed a mobility option consisting of load cell technology which allows the stretcher to completely mimic the use of "normal" non-powered stretchers with one key difference — the significant reduction in the amount of effort to start, cruise and stop the stretcher on any surface or incline with up to a 700 lbs patient load. By pressing forward on the handles, the "driver" accelerates the stretcher forward. When the pressure is removed, the stretcher maintains the same speed until pressure is placed on the handles encouraging the unit to speed up or slow down. The invention is known as Zoom.

### Results

Kaiser's Workplace Safety Steering Committee purchased Zoom stretchers for units that required long and frequent transports for larger and complicated patients. The Steering Committee's strategy behind its purchase was to implement an educational program designed to change staff behaviors to ensure equipment was being used correctly. In June 2006, Kaiser and Stryker collaboratively conducted a push/pull test under controlled circumstances. This test revealed that Stryker Zoom stretchers required 7 lbs of start-up push force on carpet for a patient load of 200 lbs. Comparatively, a stretcher lacking motorized technology required 27 lbs of start-up push force. Therefore, the Zoom stretcher reduced start-up push force by 75%.

### Conclusion

Terri Simpson-Tucker, Assistant Administrator of Support Services and Executive Sponsor for Workplace Safety at Kaiser San Jose, said that Zoom is an important part of her workplace safety strategy. "As a hospital administrator, it is imperative that we protect our patients and staff. Zoom is an essential component of a well thought out stretcher fleet, one that helps protect patients and staff." Certified Nursing Assistant Transporter Dharmesh Patel added, "I always use a Zoom gurney when it's available. Most people would say they endorse it 100% — I endorse it 110% because I know when I use it both myself and my patients are always safe."

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