

# Tamarack HTI introduces revolutionary cushionless wheelchair seat positioned to take on the pressure injury epidemic.

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[Tamarack HTI](#) introduces revolutionary cushionless wheelchair seat positioned to take on the pressure injury epidemic.

Minnesota-based orthotics, prosthetics, and complex rehab industry innovator debuts their personalized strap-based wheelchair seat designed to prevent and treat pressure injuries, which affect up to 1/3 of wheelchair users and costs the healthcare industry 60,000 lives and up to \$26.8 billion annually in the US alone.

Motivated by the failure of current wheelchair technologies to adequately address the prevalence of pressure sores, Tamarack HTI product designers developed the strap-based [FlexForm](#) custom seating solution to address the leading causes of these debilitating and potentially deadly injuries. The chair will be showcased at the April 2023 International Seating Symposium in Pittsburgh, PA, April 13 - 15.

Pressure injuries can have debilitating, expensive, and even deadly consequences. The US Department of Health and Human Services estimates they kill 60,000 people each year, or more than six people every hour. HHS also estimates that up to \$26.8 billion per year is spent on pressure injury treatment in the U.S. alone. The FlexForm revolutionizes seating with a simple concept: an adjustable strap weave. This breathable seat is rapidly custom-fitted in-clinic, and



FlexForm

FlexForm--Seating for Life



This has been such a quantum leap in comfort that it's hard to overstate how effective it has been."

*Richard Crumb, FlexForm user  
since 2014*

may be adjusted multiple times. The design addresses the trifecta of leading injury causes: friction, microclimate, and pressure management. Straps are adjusted to load pressure on areas where it is tolerated, and reduce it in at-risk areas or create spot relief for wound management and prevention. Placement of proprietary [GlideWear™](#) low-friction fabric on the seat cover reduces damaging levels of shear and friction in at-risk areas. The open weave of the straps paired with the breathable cover allows dissipation

of heat and moisture well beyond what is possible with current cushion technology.

Customization of the FlexForm is achieved by temporarily attaching the Rapid Molding System that allows the straps to lengthen or shorten. The initial fit is automatic when the client sits in the seat; the straps lengthen as necessary to create a custom contour. Pressure mapping and hand palpation are then used to locate at-risk areas, and further adjustments are made.

Unlike typical custom cushions which take weeks for turnaround, the FlexForm fitting is done completely in-clinic. Any at-risk areas are addressed immediately, and the seat can be personalized as necessary to accommodate injuries, surgeries, or other body changes.

"We knew that we could affect pressure distribution using the strap technology. We knew that we could affect the shear stress situation by reducing friction with GlideWear as part of the covering, and we knew we could impact and improve microclimate because of the nature of the strap construction and the fabrics. Adding those things all up produces a safe, stable, and durable seating surface. We have people who've been using it with confidence for years and that's a powerful thing. The FlexForm chair really is the most impactful wheelchair improvement that we've seen in decades," says FlexForm product designer Mark Payette.

"Working with people over time, one thing I love about it is that there are people that have had these extensive histories of pressure injuries that keep recurring or just never go away, and with the FlexForm, the pressure sores go away and they stay away. It breaks that old model of what a cushion could be. It's something completely different." says Caroline Portoghesi, OTR/L, ATP/SMS and Rehab Consultant at Handi Medical.

Tamarack is currently seeking strategic partnerships for the FlexForm technology. Tamarack will be exhibiting at the 2023 International Seating Symposium, April 13-15, in Pittsburgh, PA.

Founded in 1990, Tamarack Habilitation specializes in bringing innovative products to the orthotics, prosthetics, and complex rehab industries worldwide. From fabrics to films, joints to wheelchair seating, they provide an expanding line of unique products addressing the root causes of issues related to flexion, shear, and friction. Their patented designs have been sold and licensed to MIPS, Permobil, and other industry-leading companies. Based out of Minnesota,

Tamarack is owned wholly by the Marty and Peg Carlson family. All design and manufacturing take place in the United States.

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