



## Thank You Prairie Heart



We take this opportunity to thank "Prairie Heart" for their warm reception at the recent show and conference event in Regina. It is a pleasure doing events like this when the host bends over backwards to assist with receiving your goods and helping out on the ground as well. Thanks also to Sheila Buck

who presented power add on technology at this event.

On a side note, we support Jason Kelln from Prairie Heart, Steve Cranna from VGM, CADA, and everyone else calling for a certification program for folks working in this industry assisting people to get into equipment that better meets their needs.

## ADP Leadership

When you have your nose to the grind stone working with individuals everyday trying to assist them to have their needs met through a public program that appears to avoid communicating with anyone and when they do they say "NO" you get a little jaded and lose faith in folks. The Assistive Devices Program (ADP) in Ontario appear to have buried their heads in the sand claiming they are unable to do anything because the government is doing a complete review of the program and they choose to wait and see.

My mom always told me to look at the positive side of the situation, but this one is hard when you are aware of the last couple auditor general reports which have not been complimentary to the operations of ADP at all. And, the former Liberal Government slashed reimbursement funding by approximately 26% straight across the board limiting the opportunities for people benefiting from the program.

When requests from the community to ADP to make some simple changes like acknowledging applications when received gets an unequivocal "NO" response, one has to take another look at all the data before simply exploding

with rage over the tremendous injustice that is being done to Ontarians with a disability by the civil servants at ADP!

Is there no leadership at ADP? Are people just putting in time until retirement? Are we able to spread the blame to governments, dealers, manufacturers, prescribers, or others involved in the delivery system? Or, should we further exam the auditor generals report to see if it is truly a systemic problem. I don't doubt it is a difficult task operating ADP and there may not be an easy fix, but we hear the frustration with the program everyday on the lack of communication; everyone can do more!

## Ontario Auditor General

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provided about \$514 million through ADP to help purchase devices for over 400,000 Ontario residents in 2017/2018.

The audit in 2009 listed a number of oversights, device pricing issues, and staff training problems that were not corrected in the 2011 follow up.

ADP expenditures are based on usage and not subject to budget limits. It is expected to grow with the aging population noting that 60% of folks benefiting from the program in 2017/18 were over 65 years of age. Over the last 10 years, expenditures have increased by 48% which is in line with the 47% increase in program beneficiaries while Ontario's population increased by about 10%.

The Auditor General's reports on the functioning of ADP has been damning, but the other thing that stands out is the abuse by the vendors of the program. ADP limit the vendors in their program subjectively; there is **no appeal process** and it appears evident that the deeper pockets have "Sunny Ways". There are approximately 1200 vendors submitting over 400,000 claims per year; with only two compliance officers they have reviewed 235 vendor claims and recovered \$10 million in overpayments! However, they were only able to recover \$1000.00 from thirteen vendors who were abusing the system to the tune of \$5.5 million dollars! Further, one vendor who was forced to repay \$250,000.00 in 2015/16 has had no follow up despite the fact they continue to submit claims totaling \$5-6 million

annually! The varying markups for the same product are another story which should certainly not be the case.

Then there are issues with authorizers submitting large numbers of applications through single vendors leading to the thought that there may be conflict of interest issues.

The issue we hear most about is one where ADP has failed miserably with the help of their recently acquired Central Equipment Pool (CEP) contractor. Whereas they held a tender to bring Shoppers Home Health Care (SHHC) on board to run that program initially (shutting out business to local “mom and pop” stores), they simply appointed Motion Specialties (Motion Cares) to run the CEP when SHHC left the mobility business after the devastating Liberal cuts of June 2015 to the ADP product reimbursement pricing. The program costs have increased by 33% and the service to end users has changed dramatically for the worse. This writer is not aware of the issues ADP has in meeting the needs of the person in a complex power chair situation, but surely having all vendors properly authorized to deal with the manufacturers CEP product involved in repairing and providing new would be a significant blessing to the end user that needs that equipment for daily needs to be met!

## Batec Fall Promotion

The new electronics is offered on the 2019 Batec products (Mini, E2, E2 Black Edition, Scrambler) and we have them in stock or enroute. We are also getting ready for the 2020 line up of

Batec offerings by having a Fall Special on all in stock products. **November 1 - 30 we offer a retail discount on all in stock Batec's.** The discount structure will be as follows for both para and quad versions:

- Batec E2 including the Black Special Edition <10%
- Batec Scrambler <10%
- Batec Mini <15%
- Batec Electric <20%
- Batec Rapid <20%

## Softwheel - Skateboards

SoftWheel was founded in 2011 and have developed advanced in-wheel suspension technology to enhance personal mobility. Their innovative suspension system is engineered for use on a wheelchair, bicycle, and the automotive sectors.

They have raised well over \$40,000,000.00 to drive the development of their technology. Naturally, the wheelchair market is not the biggest, nor is the bicycle business, but the electric vehicle market is and Softwheel wants to be a

big player in that industry. They need that industry to look at developing skateboard vehicles (get rid of the weight, bulk, and costs associated with chassis/suspension) and use Softwheel technology to drive that industry.

On the wheelchair side, version 3.0 built here in Ontario has further reduced the actual wheel weight while maintaining their superior controlled suspension and comes in four (4) different stages (A. 55lbs. – 110 lbs. B. 110lbs. – 155 lbs. C. 155lbs – 200lbs. D. 200lbs – 300lbs). They are \$2,795.00 complete with anodized push rim and choice of tire through the dealer network in Canada.



## The Plastic Bins



We have a dozen plastic bins in the back of the shop with parts and pieces from chairs that were no longer useful to someone. They are available to folks without charge but with the responsibility of sending the previous owner an email thanking them for a part

or piece to their chair that has made a difference for them.

Call it “paying it forward” or whatever you wish but if you make someone’s day with a simple gesture like “Lucky Goldstar” would use; Life’s Good!

## Bits and Bytes

- 49 OSOT & Therapy Now “Seating” Oct 23, Barrie, ON;
- 49 CFPDP Hall of Fame Nov 6, Royal York, Toronto, ON;
- 49 Oceania Seating Sym Nov 12-14 Melbourne, AU;
- 49 Abilities Expo Dec 13-15, Dallas, TX;
- 49 Abilities Expo Feb 21-23, 2020 Los Angeles, CA;
- 49 36<sup>th</sup> ISS March 3-6, 2020 Vancouver, BC;
- 49 Abilities Expo May 1-3, 2020 New York, NY;
- 49 CSMC 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary May 5-6, 2020 Toronto, ON;
- 49 Abilities Expo May 29-31, 2020 Toronto, ON.

**BESPOKE PLUS** is the newsletter of 49 Bespoke Inc., which markets products from around the world designed to better meet the needs of people with a disability.

We have grown up in sport, have a social service background, and have adopted an advocacy role in our business practice. Comments are welcome.