

LIFE ROLLS ON

Life Rolls On Statement on Powered Exoskeletons

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Founded by world champion quadriplegic surfer Jesse Billauer, Life Rolls On is dedicated to improving the quality of life for young people affected by spinal cord injury. Believing that adaptive surfing and skating could inspire infinite possibilities beyond paralysis. Life Rolls On began as a splash into the unknown on September 11, 2001; achieved 501c3 nonprofit status in 2002; and now touches the lives of hundreds of thousands.

The National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center, estimates 12,500 new cases of spinal cord injury each year, often resulting in the loss the ability to stand and walk. Individuals who are non-ambulatory are relegated to prolonged sitting and susceptible to secondary health complications and more likely to incur a variety of disease states including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and stroke. The mortality rates of these individuals are significantly higher than their able bodied peers and has remained unchanged since the 1980's. There is a significant, unmet need for restorative, powered ambulation for individuals with spinal cord injury. Furthermore, recovery of ambulation is a main priority for patients and current treatments are inadequate to restore functional and sustainable ambulation.

Powered exoskeletons have been developed to restore functional ambulation, enabling individuals with spinal cord injury to stand and walk. In turn, walking and weight-bearing provides many secondary health benefits such as improved bowel and bladder function, reduced utilization of pharmaceuticals and improved cardiovascular function. The benefits of increased physical activity are well documented and translate into significant improvements in health outcomes and decreased utilization of high cost healthcare. Powered exoskeletons enable a highly sedentary group to regain walking function and live healthier and higher quality lives.

Life Rolls On maintains a position supporting the safety and efficacy of powered exoskeletons for individuals with spinal cord injury for home and personal use. Life Rolls On believes that restoring walking function with a powered exoskeleton improves health outcomes and that the benefits outweigh the associated risks.

Life Rolls On concludes that powered exoskeletons have been thoroughly vetted by the scientific and clinical communities since emerging from their developmental phase of the previous decade. This technology is no longer considered experimental and investigational, but is now normative and becoming the standard of care for patients with lower extremity paralysis and paresis due to spinal cord injury. We encourage private health insurance carriers to consider the use of powered exoskeleton devices medically necessary for well selected patients with spinal cord injury for home and personal use.

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