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OUTLOOK



Ermi

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*The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the
forefront of providing Biomechanics solutions and impacting the industry*

Ermi

Restoring Motion without Secondary Surgery

Typically, when a patient undergoes surgery for injury to the bones and joints of the body, post-operative physical therapy helps the patient down the pathway of full recovery. Unfortunately, approximately 15 percent of patients do not respond to this traditional treatment plan by stalling on their recovery of full motion. Studies have shown that the institution of early therapy has a positive impact but that the number of patients with significant motion loss remains. The U.S. healthcare sector has been investing a significant amount of time and resources in finding newer ways to reduce this number and deliver effective post-op care for all patients. This problem is particularly common in patients from the U.S. armed forces as traumatic injuries or surgeries related to post-traumatic arthritis are likely to have motion loss requiring extensive post-op physical therapy that is extremely painful and geographically challenging for the patient.

To address this challenge and assist orthopedic surgeons and physical therapists in enhancing the efficacy of post-op care in patients with its portfolio of innovative devices is Georgia-based Ermi. “By combining patented technology with our unique patient care program, we can return these outlier patients to mainstream recovery without the risks of additional surgery, hospitalization or prolonged therapy,” says Thomas Branch, MD, founder and CEO of Ermi.

As an orthopedic surgeon with three-decade experience and a family

of army veterans, Dr. Branch wanted to thank the U.S. armed forces for their services in a way that mattered. Subsequently, during his time as Chief of Orthopedic Surgery at a veterans affairs hospital (V.A.), Dr. Branch recognized that the lack of an effective post-op therapy for these complicated patients was a challenge that was plaguing the healthcare space for decades. As a way to bridge this gap and help save U.S. healthcare dollars, Dr. Branch started Ermi to provide a portfolio of patient care programs that enabled faster and more efficient recovery for patients with severe motion loss. Currently, the company provides compact devices, namely, the Flexionater® and Extensionater®, specially designed for the flexion and extension of critical joints like the knee, shoulder, ankle, and elbow, among others.

Ermi’s Extensionater products are portable pneumatic devices that are uniquely designed to improve the extension of vital joints and ensure an enhanced range of motion regardless of the injury. “Extensionater offerings comprise an air bladder that lets the patient control the air pressure within the frame of the device,” adds Dr. Shaun Stinton, director of R&D at Ermi. On the other hand, the company’s Flexionater suite of devices leverages a hydraulic system that can generate a torque of up to 215 foot-pounds, facilitating the accommodation of a wide range of patient-specific scar tissue. From an R&D standpoint, Ermi’s portfolio is backed by extensive studies

that confirm the Extensionater and Flexionater lines’ spotless record of zero patient complications related to its use. “Unlike conventional physical therapy strategies and electronic flexion products, our Flexionater system allows patients to apply their level of force to their injured joint while feeling its impact both at the injured joint and at the uninjured arm applying the force. This drives users to perform more therapy and helps shorten the recovery time,” states Gil Madrid, chief marketing officer at Ermi.

Even with such unmatched product competencies, Dr. Branch considers Ermi’s patient care coordination team to be the real stars behind the company’s success. Ermi’s care team professionals are specially trained to become patient care coordinators that work in collaboration with doctors and physical therapists to develop clear communication between patients

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By combining patented technology and our unique patient care programs, we enable patients to quickly get back to their lives without risking the complications associated with additional surgery

and their care team. More recently, owing to the sudden and far-reaching disruptions caused by the COVID-19



pandemic, Ermi quickly developed newer and safer protocols to continue educating their patient care coordinators on operating in the “new normal.” At the same time, Ermi released technology that allowed its workforce to provide remote setup services and also provided full PPE for personnel in cases where they had to enter client sites. On the customer end, COVID-19 has also led Ermi to offer innovative remote and virtual installations directly to patient homes. The company also offers its Ermi App (Android and Apple), allowing patients to provide instant feedback and communicate with their care coordinators in an efficient and HIPAA-compliant manner.

According to Bob Baumgartner, director of marketing at Ermi, the company places significant emphasis on customer feedback and continually strives to incorporate features and functionality that boost patient engagement and compliance. “We rapidly built safer and more efficient ways to communicate with our clients and patients because our team knew that the lack of post-op therapy due to COVID-19 concerns could lead to long-term

serious complications,” opines Madrid. The company also provides comprehensive video instructions to assist patients in setting up the device safely and correctly.

Moving forward, Ermi plans to release its new line of products called the Flexionater+™ that utilizes its patented hydraulic system combines both flexion and extension assistance at the force level of a physical therapist

in a single device. Flexionater+ devices for the elbow and ankle have already entered the market and will be available across the nation before 2020 ends. Delving deeper into the series of offerings, Dr. Stinton elaborates, “While in the past we offered extension with a pneumatically driven separate device, the new Flexionater+ will both flex and extend a patient’s elbow/ankle, driving better extension and stretching,” extols Dr. Stinton. From a geographical standpoint, Ermi plans to expand its footprint from half the states in the U.S. to across the entire country. To conclude, Dr. Branch reiterates the ethos of his company, “We will continue to provide innovative patient care services combined with proprietary products that prevent prolonged therapy and secondary surgery allowing patients to regain their original quality-of-life in a highly effective and cost-effective way.”



Thomas P Branch, M.D.