



REHACARE 2024 - Specialist Article / September 2024

Medical supply stores: individual aids for independent living

It's not just about finding the right wheelchair: when homes are furnished to meet the demands of people with impairments many obstacles can be overcome on the path towards independence. At REHACARE 2024 you can experience how medical supply stores can provide personalised support here.

Staying mobile after an accident, an operation or with chronic illness – this takes various forms depending on each individual's personal circumstances: elaborate technical solutions such as wheelchairs for children are – as a rule – customised. With both children and adults, it is important to consider how to re-design the home so the person can continue living in it well. Mobility restrictions are always also a question of the surroundings a person moves in," says Kirsten Abel of "Wir versorgen Deutschland" (WvD) (We supply Germany). This alliance of central organisations of service providers is committed to ensuring the supply of those high-quality aids required by just under 25% of Germany's statutorily insured patients. By WvD' accounts, over 120,000 employees as well as 8,000 service providers in orthopaedic technology, orthopaedic footwear technology, rehabilitation technology and home health care are committed to this.

Various disciplines are working together

One of the large health service providers also exhibiting at REHACARE 2024 is rahm, a company with 50 outlets in the Rhineland. rahm has focused on offering specialist staff for years now putting together care teams that cover various disciplines. They work hand in hand using state-of-the-art technology such as 3D printers to manufacture matching aids. "We have been driving the digitalisation of our trade since 2015 and offer



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solutions to reach maximum independence. At times, this can be little things such as an additional functionality for a hand orthosis, that eases writing," reports Lutz Klasen, Head of the Technical Orthopaedics Business Unit. Certified quality claims and seals such as those issued by Stiftung Deutsche Schlaganfallhilfe (German Stroke Foundation) vouch for the accomplished multi-disciplinary cooperation at rahm.

Relieve pain, delay operations

Providing help and advice is considered key to its job by this modern medical supply store – prescriptions, for example, are checked with regard to the physician's diagnosis. At special events such as the Osteoarthritis Test Weeks, for example, customers can try out which orthoses are best suited to relieve and stabilise the knee. The aim is to relieve the pain and delay knee operations as long as possible with the right knee orthosis.

Tobias Kurtz, editor-in-chief at trade magazine GesundheitsProfi, also observes how the medical supply sector is changing and offering more and more services: "One reason being the ageing population and their changing needs. Add to this the rising number of out-patient operations – patients return home right after their operations or come back from rehabilitation earlier. Medical supply stores offer the corresponding added value allowing these patients to participate in life." Another business segment according to Kurtz is prevention. "Sportspeople can prevent injuries by wearing knee support bandages and insoles."

Leonardo Award promotes creativity

Customers increasingly gather information online to find local specialists – such as experts for breast protheses or custom-made wheelchairs. "When the sickness fund does not cover all costs, patients top up to have better brakes or more lightweight materials. Upselling is the watchword here." The trade magazine GesundheitsProfi also organises the "Leonardo Award", where Hannes Niemann, Project Director of REHACARE, sits on the jury. The renowned award recognises outstanding marketing





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achievements of German specialist medical supply and rehabilitation stores as well as in orthopaedic technology and plays a pivotal role in promoting the creativity and development of the sector.

Kirsten Abel of "Wir Versorgen Deutschland" views the experts working at medical supply stores as case managers who come up with individual solutions for anyone approaching them. However, there are obstacles to overcome on this path: "To ensure that all insured persons have access to innovative medical products manufacturers still have to go through years of procedures to be included in the list of medical aids." Last not least, medical supply retail – a future market with growing demand – is also affected by skilled labour shortages.

Information:

REHACARE 2024 will present the forum programme "Sanitätshaus 2030" for the first time. This programme is tailored specifically to the needs of specialist medical supply retailers and provides insights into new business lines as well as effective upselling strategies for technological products and counselling competencies.



News from the medical supply sector can be found on the websites of the "GesundheitsProfi": gesundheitsprofi.de

For latest news on the supply of medical aids go to the websites of "Wir versorgen Deutschland https://wirversorgendeutschland.de/

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REHACARE 2024

From September 25 to 28, 2024, a unique community of people with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and supporters, as well as companies that cater to their needs, will gather in Düsseldorf. REHACARE offers an international platform for exchanging ideas with experts and like-



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minded individuals. There are numerous opportunities to make new connections and stay informed about the latest developments and trends. These include digital and analog mobility solutions, assistive devices, care and therapy options, as well as inclusive sports and leisure activities.

For more information about REHACARE 2024, including the exhibitor and event program, please visit the official trade fair website: www.rehacare.com

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