

## **RESNA POSITION PAPERS ON WHEELCHAIR SEAT ELEVATORS & WHEELCHAIR STANDERS**

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In the fall of 2005 the Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) issued its first position paper regarding specific wheeled mobility and seating interventions. The first was on the application of wheelchair seat elevators. By CSMC 2006 a second paper should be published on wheelchair standers, with more in development.

These position papers are the first in the wheeled mobility and seating industry issued by an international professional organization declaring the medical and functional necessity of specific assistive technology devices. With limited scientific evidence available in the wheeled mobility industry, these papers offer a unique opportunity to strengthen the argument when prescribing such devices, as well as help educate on the benefits of such features.

This session will present the RESNA position paper on Seat Elevators as well as Wheelchair Standers. In addition, the development process for a RESNA position paper will be discussed. Finally, case examples of how the position papers have been utilized to overturn unfavorable funding decisions as well as to apply for coverage policies will be reviewed.

### **The Development of a Position Paper**

A RESNA position paper is an official statement by the organization that, based on the consensus of experts, summarizes current research and best-practice trends in relevant areas.

RESNA Position papers are developed based on the following process;

- A volunteer or a group of volunteers takes the lead and prepares the first draft of the paper. This requires an extensive search and review of the literature. The draft position paper reviews all relevant scientific evidence in light of the different medical, functional, and psycho-social benefits, and assigns a level of evidence based on accepted standards for systematic review and evidence based practice.
- The first draft is reviewed and commented on by a small group of volunteer practitioners with expertise in the area. If needed, the group recommends additional evidence to be reviewed and included, wording changes, outline changes, or any other changes as needed.
- The second draft is presented at the annual RESNA conference as a public session that offers an opportunity for all RESNA attendees to provide comments and opinion.
- Following the session at the RESNA conference, the position paper is further updated and shared with the original group of volunteer clinicians for comment before it is presented to the RESNA Board of Directors, who may or may not request additional changes.
- Once accepted by the Board, the position paper is posted on the RESNA website for public access.
- Future plans include publication of these papers in *Assistive Technology Journal* in order for them to be indexed and retrievable.

### **Uses of a RESNA Position Paper**

A RESNA position paper may serve to guide practitioners in the development and provision of Assistive Technology interventions and further provide evidence based justification necessary to obtain funding for appropriate equipment. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Assist in obtaining funding for the appropriate Assistive Technology device
- Educate funding sources, families, other practitioners on the benefits of a specific Assistive Technology device
- Comprehensively reviews all medical, functional, and psycho-social benefits
- Summarizes applicable scientific evidence with evidence-based levels assigned
- Provides an important document to be used when requesting policy/coverage/reimbursement changes on federal/local level
- Provides a basis for future research by reviewing existing level of evidence

### **Future of RESNA Position Papers**

Position papers are currently being developed in the areas of ultralightweight manual wheelchairs as well as tilt in space and reclining backrest seat functions. Anyone interested in volunteering to assist with these papers or wish to initiate a position paper can contact the authors of this session.

### **Speaker Bios:**

Julianna Arva, MS, ATP is Pediatric Product Specialist for Permobil Inc. Her tasks include education, support, marketing, product development, and coordination of all pediatric activities. She has published and lectured extensively, and has clinical experience with pediatric and adult populations. She can be reached at [Julianna.Arva@permobilus.com](mailto:Julianna.Arva@permobilus.com).

Mark R. Schmeler, PhD, OTR/L, ATP is on the faculty of the Department of Rehabilitation Science Technology at the University of Pittsburgh. He has over 15 years of clinical experience managing and providing wheeled mobility and seating interventions. He teaches and conducts research in this area specifically in the areas of outcome measurement, evidence based practice, and service delivery models. He can be reached at [Schmeler@pitt.edu](mailto:Schmeler@pitt.edu).

Current RESNA Position Papers can be retrieved and downloaded on the RESNA website at [www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org).