

The Road to Safety Through Sleep

A discussion with Steve Sauerwein, vice president of marketing and business development at NOA Medical

Can you discuss NOA Medical's bed systems?

For more than 30 years, NOA Medical has been a recognized leader in the development and manufacture of high quality, fully adjustable, electric high/low bed systems and sleep safety accessories for the long-term care (LTC) market, which includes the Elite Low Bed, NOA Light, Bariatric Bed, Twin Elite Riser and the NOA Elite R600. We feel this full line of LTC beds covers the gamut for the market.

However, the company has remained committed to innovation and growth – continuing to add new products to our line of beds. In 2014 NOA made a business decision to create a new division within NOA: NOAH Hospital Division. This new division introduced a line of hospital beds for the acute care market – the NOAH Platinum Series. The line includes dynamic features including an in-bed scale, central locking systems and a digital nurse control panel with real-time readouts for bed angle and height, to name a few. We approached [it] as a high-functioning bed at a good price in order to help enter the marketplace.

As a recognized player in the LTC marketplace, how did you approach the acute care market differently?

We are an established player in the LTC market. And when you're discussing the approach of beds in the LTC market, it is really about a basic bed. However, when you get into acute care, this market is driven by a few high-end players.

In turn, we developed a hospital bed line that offers a lot of standard features that fit the needs of the marketplace. The creation of the bed line was not completed in a silo; we talked to nurses, clinicians and caregivers to find out what they required as standard safety features. In the process of developing the acute care beds, we looked at the biggest players in the market, and we developed our beds to compete with their standard medical-surgical beds with equal quality and more affordable pricing.

What role does safety play in an integrated health delivery system?

Patient and caregiver/clinician safety plays a large role in an integrated health delivery system and always has played a huge role



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in product design where NOA is concerned. NOA, at its inception, provided safety-driven bed designs that focused on patient fall prevention, met entrapment guidelines and provided for fully functioning and highly adjustable bed solutions.

In the LTC market, our goal was always to provide high-low beds, which are integral as far as fall prevention is concerned. We took this same fall-prevention approach with the NOAH Platinum Series. Within hospitals, fall incidences are evident and growing. And with all the changes in healthcare, it has become a greater issue. In fact, it is estimated that more than 500,000 falls occur each year in U.S. hospitals, resulting in 150,000 injuries. For both our bed lines, we tried to approach it two ways – safety of the patient as well as safety of the caregiver.

With multiple competitors in the acute care market, how are NOA's beds changing the industry landscape?

We feel our cost-effective approach is the way we are going to impact the landscape. We focused on the key features – features that are used efficiently within the hospital on an everyday basis. Ultimately, addressing the clinicians' needs for quality patient care while providing them an attractive, quality high-functioning



bed at an affordable price is how we will impact the [acute care] marketplace.

How is NOA positioning itself as a leader in the field of safety?

As a leader in the LTC low bed system and sleep safety market for more than three decades, we recognize that expertise in the LTC market does not necessarily translate to the acute care market. However, we do feel that given our 30 years of experience as a leading manufacturer, we have the ability to learn and to educate ourselves on the acute care market.

Consequently, we are able to factor in important product and program features such as quality of bed design, cost-effective fall prevention solutions and excellent customer service to assist in growing our market share while better meeting the needs of the hospital customer.

From the outset, it might be hard to discern that we are a leader in the LTC market – based on our size and the fact we use distribution as our primary sales channel. Often, our products are under a private label. Despite this, we've been able to become the third largest player in the U.S. LTC market via distribution. This has been our channel to success.

Can you discuss the future of safety in healthcare?

We feel that it is in the best interest of every hospital, as well as capital equipment/product manufacturer, to find and source out best practices and workable product and program solutions to safety issues/ fall prevention so that future government mandates will be the result of best thinking by the healthcare community.

NOA Medical is confident that safety issues within the healthcare market will continue to play a prominent role in both LTC and acute care market segments. These issues will be a driving force for manufacturers who are designing future new products and programs which support and enhance patient safety within the healthcare facility. NOA feels that those manufacturers that can address safety issues within the design process, and do so while addressing the financial challenges of the acute care market through aggressive pricing, will take a leadership role within the industry.

What are its implications for healthcare providers as well as for overall patient care?

With the payer market changing, it is putting the onus on the hospital to be more vigilant in their care of their patients. For example, if the patient acquires a bed sore during their hospital stay, the hospital is responsible to heal the sore prior to the patient's transfer to a step-down facility. Because of this, hospitals are more aware of patient care and patient outcomes. Hospitals know the importance of guarding against any adverse incidents (infections, ulcers, falls, etc.) within the hospital. From our standpoint, we're not addressing everything, but we're addressing our niche – fall prevention, which will continue to be a hot-button issue for hospitals.

All of the factors surrounding patient safety within the healthcare facility will eventually lead to better and more efficient patient care through focused product offerings. Low bed systems like the Platinum Series hospital beds from NOAH will find their spot within the hospital facility, addressing patient care and safety, providing clinicians/caregivers with workable solutions to patient safety, and doing so at a very affordable price. 



For more information on approaching safety via long-term care and acute care beds, visit www.noamedical.com.