

# Streamline Inc. reimagines the IV pole

IV poles, those wobbly medicine racks that are ubiquitous in hospitals, haven't changed much in 50 years. But startup Streamline Inc. has developed a new model that makes it easier to shuttle patients around. It's seeking about \$400,000 in capital to ramp up manufacturing.

Peter Blankenship, along with his brother, Sam, founded the firm after volunteering at a hospital while a student at the



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## **STREAMLINE INC.**

CEO: Rick Schultz

City: Minneapolis

Business: IV pole technology

Employees: 5

University of St. Thomas.

Existing IV poles can be troublesome when moving patients, because the pole moves independently from the bed and can get tangled in equipment. Many hospitals now require several people to help with moving patients — a drain on resources, Blankenship added.

“A good use for a [nurse] isn't pushing patients.”

The balancing act also can lead to injuries for employees, company officials noted.

To solve the problem, Streamline developed an IV pole that attaches to a bed, and whose wheels retract when a patient is ready to be moved. Since launching, the firm has raised \$300,000 in capital and developed a prototype, which it tested at a Twin Cities hospital system. After receiving feedback, the firm has tweaked its design and plans to put hoped-for capital toward manufactur-

ing additional products.

Rick Schultz, Streamline's CEO and a former vice president at Arizant Medical, said he expects the firm's product to succeed partially because there's historically been little entrepreneurial energy put into revamping the IV Pole. “The IV pole you see on *M\*A\*S\*H* is the one you see today.”