Kessler Foundation Identifies Six Participants to Test Ekso

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WEST ORANGE, N.J., Oct. 14, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Kessler Foundation, in collaboration with Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, announced that it has selected six participants for the Ekso exoskeleton investigational studies, which will commence October 17. Made by Ekso Bionics, Ekso is a wearable, robotic, battery-powered exoskeleton that enables wheelchair users to stand and walk.

Ekso Bionics announced the rebranding of both its company name and product line on October 13, 2011. It was formerly known as Berkeley Bionics and the Ekso exoskeleton was formerly known as eLEGS.

Kessler is one of ten centers across the U.S. to partner with Ekso Bionics to develop protocols and examine how the overall health of individuals with spinal cord injury improves with Ekso. During the week of October 17th, representatives from Ekso Bionics will train staff and research participants at Kessler on using the exoskeleton. Gail Forrest, PhD, Interim Director of Human Performance and Movement Analysis Research at Kessler Foundation, and Steven Kirshblum, MD, Medical Director and Director of Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, will lead a collaborative team for the investigational study. Kessler will acquire its own Ekso for research and clinical use in January 2012.

"This technology provides hope that individuals with paralysis and lower extremity weakness can walk," said Dr. Kirshblum. "Through our collaboration, we bring innovative technology directly to patient care when conducting clinical trials."

Kessler is also one of seven centers in the Christopher and Dana Reeve NeuroRecovery Network, a program designed to retrain the nervous system through intensive repetitive locomotor training—during which the individual is harnessed over a treadmill as therapists move the legs in a walking motion. Other avenues of exploration for Kessler include Hocoma's LokomatPro V6 and epidural stimulation. The Lokom
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