

Collaborative Bracing

Missouri orthotics facility partners with therapists for optimal patient care

AFTER STARTING HIS CAREER as a physical therapist, Tim Vogl, PT, CO, earned his orthotic certification from the American Board for Certification in Orthotics, Prosthetics, and Pedorthics. He worked in a hospital setting for several years before teaming up with his wife, Kelly Vogl, OTR/L—a licensed occupational therapist—to open Streamline Orthotics & Prosthetics in St. Louis in 2008.

“Working within a teaching hospital inspired Tim to open his own business,” explains Kelly. “We wanted the feel of an academic culture, where we would find gratification in being challenged and motivated to do more challenging and better work with patients.” The couple’s interest in education led Streamline to pursue recognition by the National Commission on Orthotic and Prosthetic Education as a residency site; several budding clinicians have completed their residencies at the facility.

For now, Streamline O&P is primarily an orthotic company, with three certified orthotists and a certified prosthetic/orthotic assistant on staff; the facility refers prosthetic cases to an outside clinician. The Vogls are in the market for a certified prosthetist to expand their offerings to include onsite prosthetic services.

The company occupies a building that once held an architectural design firm. “We integrated their features into an ‘urban contemporary’ medical facility of about 5,000 square feet,” says Tim. The space includes a gait room, a pediatric room, two additional clinical rooms, and a fabrication lab. Clinicians work closely with the



Streamline Orthotics & Prosthetics facility in St. Louis, Missouri

FACILITY:
Streamline
Orthotics &
Prosthetics

OWNERS:
Tim Vogl, PT, CO,
and Kelly Vogl,
OTR/L

LOCATION:
St. Louis, Missouri

HISTORY:
13 years



Tim Vogl, PT, CO, and
Kelly Vogl, OTR/L

Washington University School of Medicine within the BJC Healthcare system, which comprises several hospitals in the area—including a level 1 trauma center. As a result, Streamline orthotists and the company’s fabrication manager, Ted Perry, CPOA, field urgent and sometimes unusual requests. “Our devices are usually custom-made and they are always custom-fit,” says Kelly, “and we are able to offer quick turnaround, thanks to our in-house fabrication lab.”

Tim’s background as a physical therapist has been a real asset to the facility. His contacts with other PTs and physicians from his years of hospital work have translated to a steady stream of business. The facility sees a significant pediatric orthotic population—a result of word-of-mouth referrals, with most referrals coming from First Steps, Missouri’s early intervention program that aids families with young children who have disabilities or developmental delays. Tim appreciates the collaboration between orthotists and therapists and says he sees the majority of pediatric patients in joint appointments with their therapists.

The Vogls haven’t had much time or need to engage in

aggressive marketing efforts. “I refer to us as a small, boutique orthotic facility,” says Tim. “We don’t bite off more than we can chew. We can respond immediately to urgent cases, and we are always accessible to our patients, whether through phone calls, texts, or email.” Still, says Kelly, they would like to improve their website and expand their internet presence on social media, where many prospective patients look for providers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought challenges and a few opportunities to Streamline. At the beginning, nontrauma referrals slowed considerably, so the Vogls took that opportunity to transition to an O&P-focused electronic medical records system. “We hired a CPO consultant to tailor the system to our needs, and now we have everything in one place,” says Kelly. “And if we can’t get in to the office, we still have access to patient records and we can manage care remotely.” The system also includes a voice-over-internet protocol for telephone calls, which now ring both in the office and on cell phones.

Tim would like to expand the business, but only if he can maintain the level of service that Streamline patients and referral sources have come to expect. “We’d love to find a young, hungry CPO to increase our coverage,” he says.

Other goals include more work with computer-aided design and manufacturing and scanning technology. “I used to be very resistant toward it, but I feel it’s the future of the industry and you have to change,” Tim says. “We have to keep finding ways of doing things that are more efficient, easier for the patient, and cost effective.” **CP**

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