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### Retired surgeon, engineers raise money for medical device

Newly patented portable sleeve is designed for breast cancer survivors, could have other uses.

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Retired vascular surgeon Dr. Richard Kloecker searched as far as Chicago and Philadelphia a few years ago, looking for engineers to help develop a new medical device. As it turns out, he didn't have to look farther than **Innoventor** Inc. in Maryland Heights.

Kloecker, 76, teamed with **Innoventor** a few years ago to make a portable sleeve for people who suffer from lymphedema, a condition often associated with breast cancer survivors that involves painful swelling of the arms and legs.

In February, Kloecker and **Innoventor** received a patent for the device -- a sleeve that's lined with small air pockets that apply pressure to control swelling. Now, the physician-engineer team is trying to raise \$500,000 to build a prototype. "We need larger clinical trials to introduce it to the market," Kloecker said.

The patent was the ninth for **Innoventor**, an engineering and technology firm.

The quest to develop the device was rooted in Kloecker's frustration with existing treatment options. Similar sleeves are on the market, but they require frequent adjustments by physicians or they're not portable, confining patients to their homes, he said.

The so-called Kloecker sleeve has four LED readouts and a tiny air pump -- small enough to be portable -- that allow patients to monitor and adjust pressure as needed while they're on the go.

Kloecker and **Innoventor's** Applied Technology Manager Rick Lux said the applications are much broader than lymphedema. They believe it can help in treatment of venous ulcers, second- and third-degree burns and other wounds.

"I've had calls from Paris from people who saw it on our Web site ([www.innoventor.net/](http://www.innoventor.net/)) and say, 'I want it right now,'" Lux said.

Ultimately, Lux and Kloecker expect one of the sleeve's primary uses will be treating sprains and other sports-related injuries.

Asked Lux: "What pro sports team wouldn't want to get their hands on this?"