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Quality group endorses HotDog USA's patient-warming technology

by [Scott Carlson](#) Staff Writer



HotDog USA makes projects for perioperative temperature management — keeping a patient warm before, during and after surgery. (Submitted photo)

HotDog USA, a Minneapolis-based maker and distributor of patient-warming products, has gotten a boost from an industry quality partnership.

The Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) has amended its guidelines for perioperative temperature management by changing the definition of active warming to include conductive fabric patient warming, the technology used in HotDog's product, the company said last week. (Perioperative temperature management refers to keeping a patient warm before, during and after surgery.)

HotDog's conductive fabric patient warming is the only FDA-approved conductive blanket commercially available in the United States, the company said.

"This is a very exciting development for improving outcomes in surgical patient care," Dr. Brent Augustine, president of HotDog USA, said in a statement. "The market is eager for an alternative to restrictive hot-air-blowing technologies, and this is an endorsement by the health authorities on the safety and effectiveness of conductive fabric patient warming," said Augustine, a former anesthesiologist.

In an interview, Augustine said his company's sales at this point are relatively small. But HotDog's potential revenue growth is significant given the U.S. market in the blanket warming niche is about \$150 million and could grow to \$200 million annually, he said.

Founded in 2008, HotDog USA has eight employees and is enjoying growing sales, Augustine said. The company outsources its blanket production to manufacturing plants in South Dakota, Iowa and Tennessee. It sells its blankets through regional distributors to hospitals, acute care facilities and outpatient surgery clinics.

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HotDog warming uses the company's patented ThermAssure conductive fabric technology, originally designed for radar absorption by the aerospace industry, Augustine said.

In 2008 Medicare began refusing payment for many hospital-acquired infections. "Hospitals are being squeezed," Augustine said. "To improve outcomes, SCIP requires warming almost all surgical patients, but the cost of disposable warming blankets is simply too much for hospitals to bear.

"We believe that SCIP added conductive warming to give hospitals a money-saving alternative," Augustine said.

"Being reusable, HotDog warming (blankets) costs approximately 50 percent less than forced air and requires only one-tenth as much energy."

Research shows a significant reduction in post-operative infections when patients are kept warm, HotDog officials said.