

Alternating-pressure mattresses



Photo: Span-America Medical Systems Inc.

Snapshot

Highest priced unit:	\$3,610
Average priced unit:	\$1,700
Lowest priced unit:	\$894

Pricing Trends

2010-2011: +2% to +3%

2011-2012: Flat to 2%

2012-2013: + 3%

Typical delivery time: 3 to 7 days

Typical delivery charges: \$50 or more

Average life span of product: 3 to 5 years

Standard warranty: Mattresses 2 years, pumps 1 year

Extended warranty: Not typically available

Average maintenance cost per year:
Light cleaning and \$2 per filter

(Figures cited are averages of all respondents' answers. Actual pricing will vary due to volume, bundling and other factors of a purchase.)

Sources: Direct Supply, Gaymar, Invacare Continuing Care, Joerns, Keen Mobility, Moxi, Span America

FROM THE FRONT LINES:

"It's easy for a client who doesn't weigh very much to get thrown off the edges, so get the baffled edge on these. The client should be able to feel the edge of the bed. And always teach staff how to put the person in the middle of the mattress."

Liz Burns, RN, BS, Director of Nursing Services,
Good Samaritan Society-Bonell Community, Greeley, CO

Buyer Notes

- Taller is not necessarily better, vendors remind. If the unit is slanted too much, the user can slide down the bed, thereby causing more friction, instead of lessening it.
- Compare the methods of air articulation. Some will flow longitudinally, some horizontally. Know ahead of time which your clinical staff recommends.
- Be sure of what you're getting. This sector draws many competitors, some of whom play fast and easy with the definition of "alternating pressure," numerous sources warned. You must ask, for example, whether the entire mattress rises and falls or if the air pressure can be localized.

**For a list of vendors go to the:
RESIDENT CARE section, pages 145-146,
158-160, 167-168**