

Wheelchair Professionals Organization Prepares Launch

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The International Society of Wheelchair Professionals (ISWP) is a newly formed organization that will be led initially by a group based at the University of Pittsburgh. The group reportedly will be built around a federation of regional and international affiliate members and partners for the purpose of ensuring ISWP's activity are culturally relevant, timed, and focused on the most important wheelchair-related issues.

Powering up the organization is a \$2.3 million 2-year sub-award from the US Agency for International Development. The funding will help ISWP move toward establishing a global network to teach and professionalize device repair; ensure a new level of standardization, certification, and oversight; and establish relationships so that better equipment reaches the right hands, according to a media release from the [University of Pittsburgh](#).

University of Pittsburgh staff who will act as co-director of the new organization include [Jon Pearlman, PhD](#), associate director of engineering at the [Human Engineering Research Laboratories](#) (HERL), and [Rory A. Cooper, PhD](#), HERL founding director and Distinguished Professor of Rehabilitation Science and Technology.



Click on photo to see video of IPWS co-director Jon Pearlman, PhD, and other University of Pittsburgh faculty discuss the launch of the new organization and its objectives.

“For at least the last 30 years, there has been a need for an international society to help improve the quality of wheelchairs, service delivery, and repair as well,” Cooper says, “and to link consumers, designers, manufacturers, rehabilitation professionals, and wheelchair users so that we can all communicate. A rising tide raises all boats, so let’s raise the level for everybody in the world.”

The University of Pittsburgh media release also reports the organizers intend to create three areas critical to this international network, as outlined in the funding. First is to train people to build capacity for wheelchair service providers around the world. Second is to develop international wheelchair standards. And, finally, third is to initiate a broad advocacy and outreach campaign to recruit affiliates on every continent.

[Source: [University of Pittsburgh](#)]