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Woman's prescription aims to cure hospital gowns

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WEST BLOOMFIELD — People who need hospital care often have the same complaint: They hate those undignified hospital gowns and they wish someone would do something about it.

That's why West Bloomfield resident Paula Milgrom decided to start her own company marketing RxPJs™, robes designed to fit over traditional hospital gowns. The robes have zippers along the shoulders and sleeves, plus they unzip completely in the front, to accommodate patients receiving intravenous fluids.

"You don't have to get disconnected and reconnected," said Milgrom.

Milgrom found her inspiration in 2004 while hospitalized for treatment of a blood clot. Milgrom felt vulnerable, uncomfortable and exposed in the hospital gowns.

"There's got to be something better," she said she concluded then.

Milgrom began working with different housecoats as prototypes for what would become RxPJs. During a hospital stay, Milgrom said, her sister and her sister's roommate wore the early RxPJs, and the robes caught the nurses' attention. Milgrom arranged to speak with nurses and doctors in a focus group, and they supported the concept and offered criticism, she said.

That led Milgrom to a pattern-maker for a robe with the needed



improvements she discovered in the focus group. Milgrom went to New York to find the fabric for her robes.

She brought her product to the market in March.

"I am in a couple of retail stores," said Milgrom. "I do sell them individually."

Novi resident Linda Kovan knows Milgrom and used RxPJs when she had her knee replaced in May.

"By covering up, it gave me an absolute sense of privacy," said Kovan. "It made me much more comfortable in the hospital surroundings."

"It's been received pretty well," said Milgrom of her product. She added that some people just like using them as robes.

Selling the RxPJs individually is part of Milgrom's plan, but eventually she would like to do business with larger entities, too.

"I'd like to outfit hospitals and other types of facilities," she said.

The RxPJs are unisex and one-size-fits-most. She has two sizes for kids that feature multicolored zippers. She also has bed jackets.

The machine-washable robes are 50 percent cotton and 50 percent polyester. The adult size costs \$72, the kids' sizes cost \$60 and the bed jackets cost \$50.

Milgrom previously worked in her family's business, a paint company, so this is her first creative adventure in business.

"It's very exciting," she said of her new full-time job.

Milgrom will be showing her RxPJs during a show July 25 at the University of Michigan Hospital. People interested in RxPJs can contact Milgrom through her Web site at www.rxpjs.com.