

# STROLL

Hawks Landing

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

### South Florida Friends Design Accessory Drain Bags to Help **BREAST CANCER** Patients Throughout the United States and Abroad

Free for patients who want discreet comfort and convenience after surgery

BY DIANA MELLION, RESIDENT

Fort Lauderdale, FL – bcalmed, a non-profit organization founded by longtime friends Pam Kelsky and Gaby Mann to ease the journey for breast cancer survivors as they navigate post-surgical healing, has created a comfortable and convenient method of managing post-operative surgical drains.

Since its creation, bcalmed has distributed over 3,700 free bags in 27 states - including Florida – and internationally in Israel, Italy, Mexico, Guatemala and Canada.

“No one talks about the drain and what happens to your body after surgery,” said Kelsky, a Fort Lauderdale resident who is not only a breast cancer survivor, but co-founder of bcalmed. “It’s embarrassing for people to see it and surgeons told me they didn’t have a good solution, so I wanted to do something.”

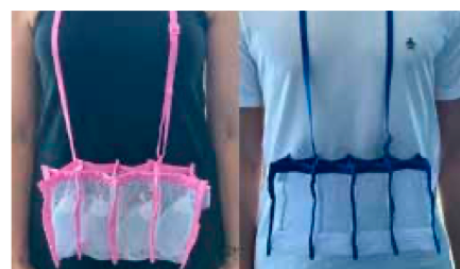
The soft polyester, durable, machine washable and waterproof bags are simply four mesh pouches that comfortably carry and conceal the surgical drains. The adjustable strap hangs around the user’s neck or shoulder to minimize the bag’s interaction with sensitive areas.

After learning she had breast cancer and undergoing surgery in February 2019, Kelsky realized the difficulties facing other post-op breast cancer patients and was determined to improve the journey for others. She wanted a way to wear surgical drains discreetly in public during the recuperation period.

As a result, Kelsky and Mann, who have always wanted to give back to their community, founded the charity and developed the bcalmed bag. The two have also created a version for men to make their journey easier.

“I was touched that Pam and I could work together to bring her idea of the bcalmed bag to fruition,” said Gaby Mann, co-founder of bcalmed. “We hope that the bag will eliminate one concern for mastectomy patients of how to manage their drains.”

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, except for skin cancers. It is about 30% (or 1 in 3) of all new female cancers each year. In 2023, about 297,790 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women.



bcalmed works with hospitals, clinics, and surgeons to make it available for patients to wear home after surgery. They obtained permission from the Cleveland Clinic Weston’s Foundation to distribute the bags to patients free of charge. So far, 6,000 bags have been produced and will be available for donation.

The founders hope individuals or groups will donate or partner with bcalmed so the bags can continue to be offered for free.

#### ABOUT BCALMED

bcalmed, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created by longtime friends Pamela Kelsky and Gaby Mann, was founded to ease the journey of breast cancer survivors while they navigate post-surgical healing. They have created a comfortable and convenient method of managing post-operative surgical drains. For more information, visit [www.bcalmed.org](http://www.bcalmed.org).

Testimonial: “My name is Lauren. I am a friend of your neighbor. I received your bcalmed prototype and it really served me. I had my initial surgery and then needed emergency surgery again soon after where I had drains inserted for several long painful days. The carrier was so convenient and gave me confidence to walk around without fear of tripping or getting them caught. Thank you thank you thank you for your kindness and thoughtful gesture. You made a difficult time a bit easier.”

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