

# Cranial Technologies Inc. plans to expand to Spain

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Cranial Technologies Inc., a manufacturer of bands used to reshape infants' abnormal heads, is expanding into Spain.

With this new franchise, Cranial Technologies has centers in three countries in addition to its 12 U.S. locations.

The Phoenix company also has plans to establish facilities in New Jersey, Connecticut and San Diego by early next year, with the San Diego facility possibly opening as early as December, said Jeanne Pomatto, chief executive officer of Cranial Technologies. All of the new U.S. centers will be owned by the company.

"We get a lot of calls from the East Coast," said Timothy Littlefield, director of research and development for the company. Many parents fly from New Jersey and Connecticut to nearby centers in surrounding states, he said.

"We know we need to get a treatment center there next," he said.

Company officials also are considering expansion to the Seattle-Portland region. The privately held company is opening one center at a time to ensure quality, Pomatto said.

"Training is very stringent," she said. The company has approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to use its DOC (Dynamic Orthotic Cranioplasty) Band to treat children with positional plagiocephaly, or abnormal head shape. The DOC Band is a medical device worn on an infant's head to redirect growth symmetrically.

With a physician's prescription, and if the treatment is proven to be medically necessary rather than cosmetic, insurance companies will pay for it, Pomatto said.

Last year, Cranial Technologies manufactured 1,469 DOC Bands. For the first nine months of 1999, the company made 1,630 bands at its Phoenix offices.

Now that use of the DOC Band is more widespread, pediatricians are referring their patients to Cranial Technologies, said Carol Erickson, vice president of operations.

In the past, usually only craniofacial surgeons and pediatric neurosurgeons knew about the DOC Bands.

Parents also have been using Cranial

## FAST FACTS

Cranial Technologies Inc.  
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- 35 employees
- \$2.7 million revenue projected for 1999
- Manufactures the DOC Band to reshape infants' abnormally shaped heads.

Technologies' web site to show their pediatricians that there is a way to correct their infants' deformed heads as an alternative to surgery.

"Specialists in large cities are very aware this is a deformity that doesn't need surgery," Pomatto said. But many physicians in rural areas aren't quite up to speed, she added.

Since the American Academy of Pediatrics announced in 1992 that the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome can be reduced by putting babies to sleep on their backs, Pomatto said she has seen an increase in the number of deformed heads.

Sometimes when babies sleep on their backs their heads widen and become flat on the back. Plus, babies aren't as active on their backs as they are on their stomachs when they're forced to use their neck and arm muscles more, Erickson said.

"We get so many big, floppy, happy babies," Erickson said.

The majority of abnormal head shapes are a result of neck problems, Littlefield said. Twins, especially, have a higher risk of abnormally shaped heads because there's just not enough room in the womb when they're developing, said Littlefield, a twin.

Besides the psychological problems of having an abnormally shaped head, children can grow up to have problems with their eyes, ears and teeth as a result of the condition.

"If they're appearing odd or different, does a child reach his or her potential in life?" Erickson asked.