US 20020129445A1

(19) United States

(12) Patent Application Publication (10) Pub. No.: US 2002/0129445 A1

Deering et al. (43) Pub. Date: Sep. 19, 2002

(54) PILLOW BLANKET

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(21) Appl. No.: **09/805,539**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 13, 2001**

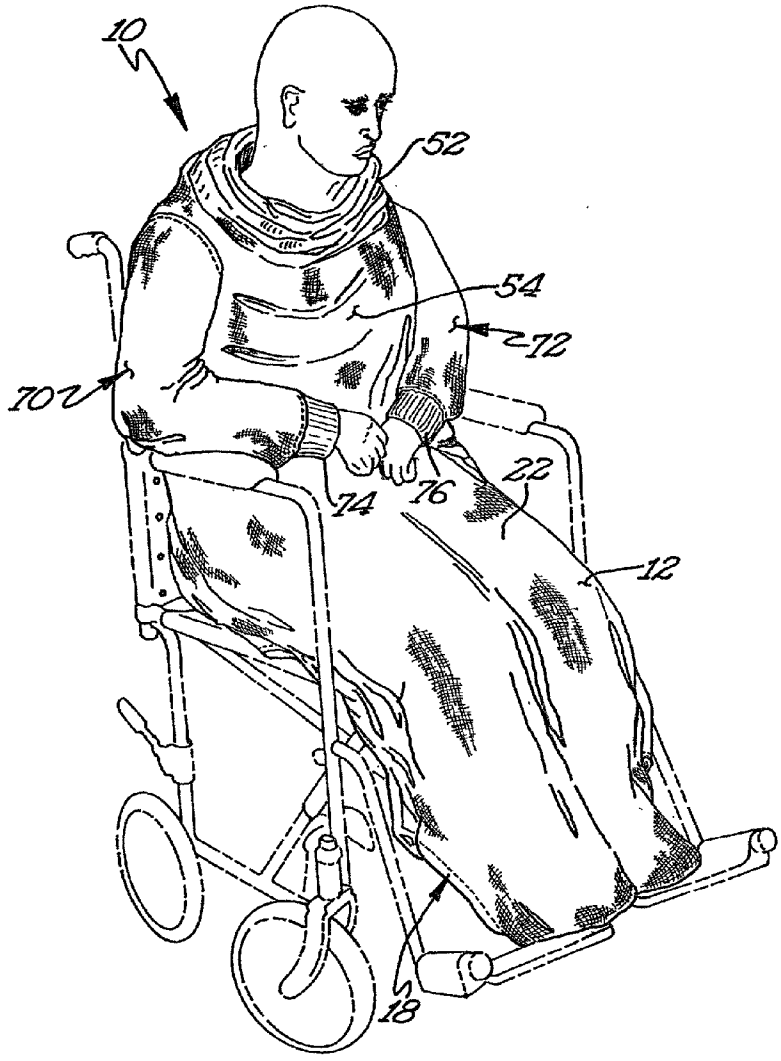
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**[7] **A47G 9/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **5/482**; 5/485; 2/69

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A pillow blanket comprises a blanket, foot pocket and a pair of sleeves. The foot pocket is made of a pocket panel secured at the side and bottom edges of the panel to the middle third portion of the blanket and the bottom edge of the blanket. A pair of sleeves is attached respectively to the perimeter of a pair of sleeve apertures in the blanket. The sleeve apertures have an oblong shape and oblique orientation. The blanket can be folded into the foot pocket to form a symmetrical pillow.



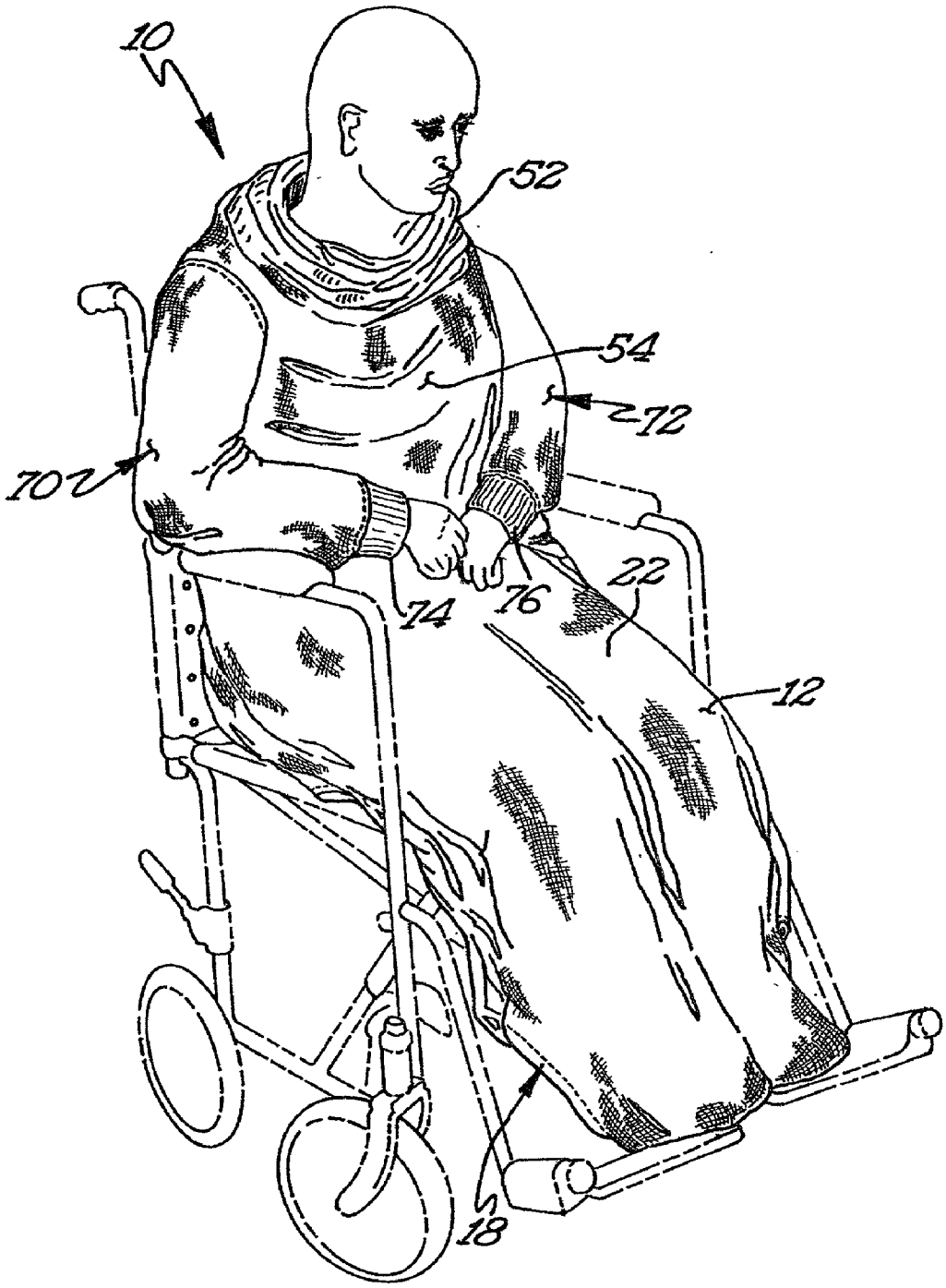


Fig 1

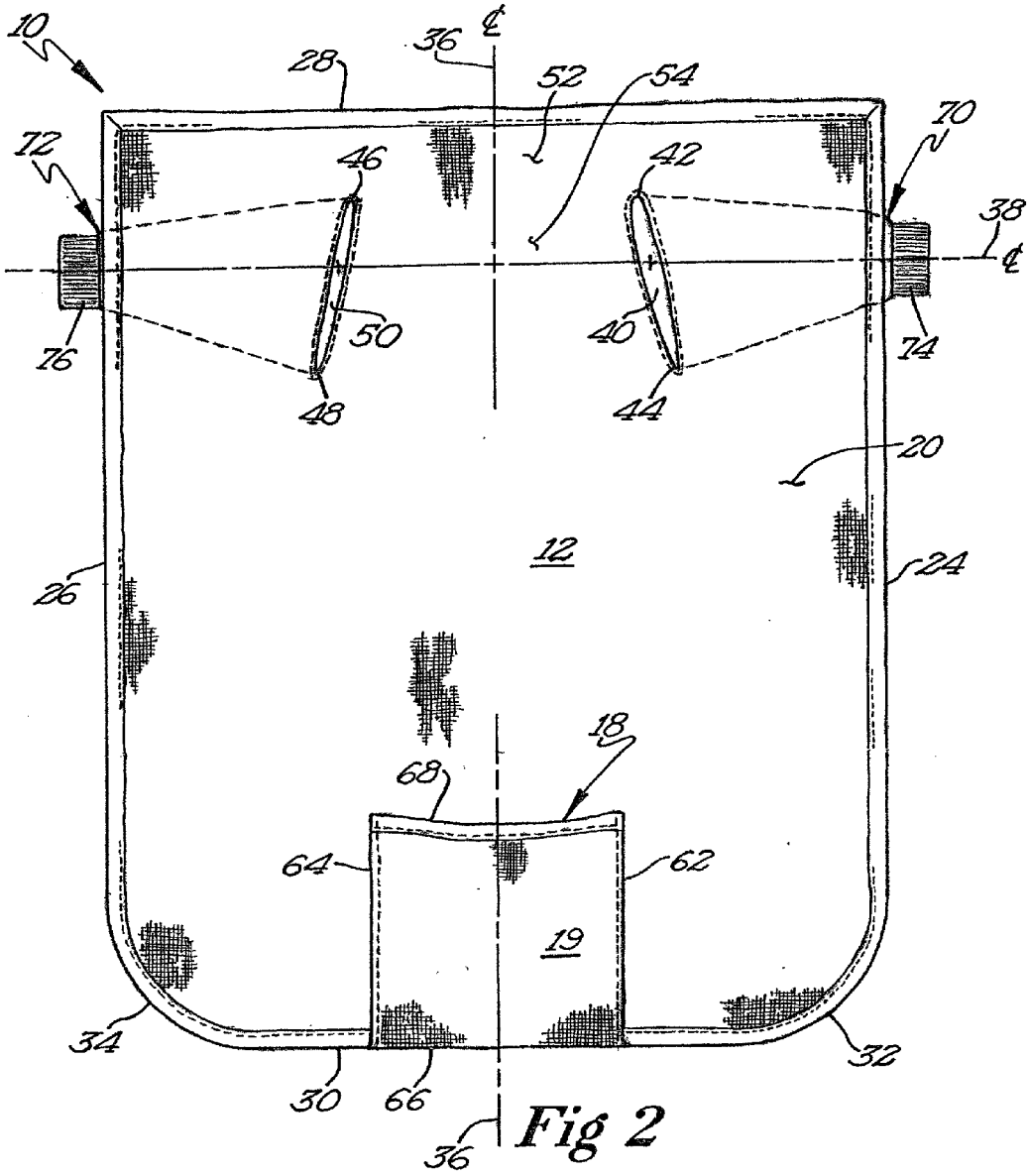

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Fig 2

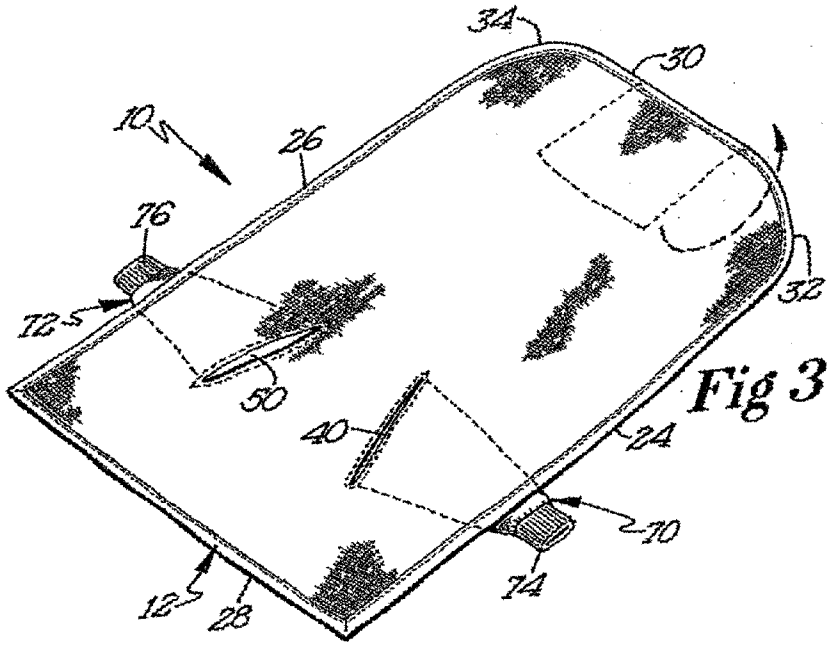

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Fig 3

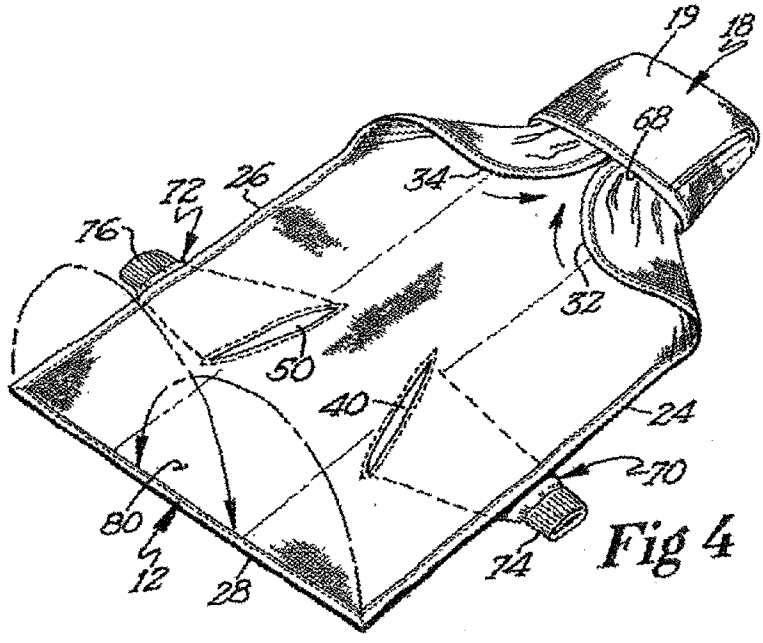

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Fig 4

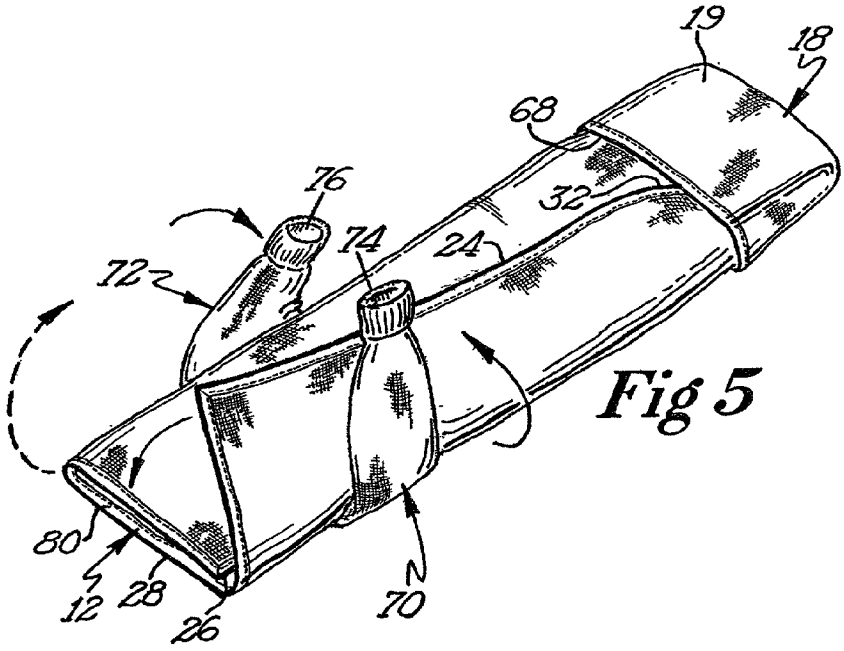


Fig 5

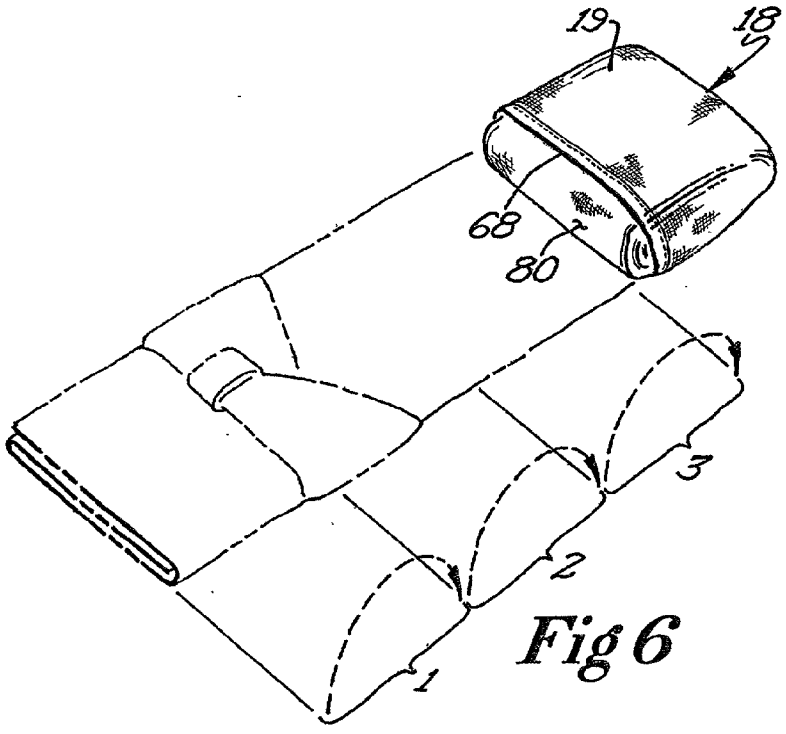


Fig 6

PILLOW BLANKET

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates generally to blankets that can be converted into a pillow without a stuff sack. More particularly, this invention pertains to blankets used in a seated or standing position that wraps from the anterior to the posterior of the user.

[0002] A variety of blanket constructions for use in an upright position evolved over many years. To keep a person warm while sitting upright in a chair or wheel chair, it is known to provide children with sleepers and also to provide sleeping bag-like structures with sleeves attached. However the restrictions presented by the use of a sleeper or bag would not work for a wheelchair bound person. Also, it is known to provide a blanket having one pocket permanently attached to one elongated edge of a blanket for permitting the blanket to be folded, rolled and tucked into the pocket to convert the blanket into a pillow as in U.S. Pat. No. 5,987,667 to Haverly et al. Another example is U.S. Pat. No. 5,245,717 to Rudy that provides a blanket with sleeves to facilitate reading a book and a pocket attached to the blanket. More commonly, a regular blanket is draped over the front side of an elderly wheelchair patient's lap to warm lap and legs. However, known blanket constructions have several drawbacks.

[0003] Traditional blankets require an extra article for storage, the stuff sack itself, which can be inconvenient to find or use. A blanket that can be folded into a pillow oftentimes looks sloppy, asymmetrical and lumpy. Some blanket users in a wheelchair complain of cold feet with a blanket that doesn't extend down far enough to cover their feet or fails to remain covered. Other times the blanket is too long and gets caught underneath the front wheels of the wheelchair. Some stiff or immobile blanket users are forced to depend upon and wait for support staff assistance to tuck the blanket underneath the feet repeatedly. Many of the known blanket constructions employ the full wrap-around design which is extremely troublesome with wheelchair, bedridden, or incontinent users. Even if a full wrap-around design is not used, hard to reach and to manipulate straps, strings, and other connecting means are commonly used and located on the upright user's back to keep the blanket from falling forward or off that sitting or standing user.

[0004] A new blanket construction is needed to overcome those disadvantages and to provide an easier way of putting on, keeping on, and taking off a blanket, while providing more warmth protection to the upright user's anterior and lateral sides, from the user's neck down through the arms and legs to the feet.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It, therefore, is an object of this invention to provide a blanket construction for a variety of users engaged in a variety of activities, including a hospital patient in a wheelchair crocheting, a student in a dorm room studying, a driver in an initially cold car traveling in winter, or a spectator seated at a fall outdoor sporting event.

[0006] Another objective of the invention is to provide a blanket that reduces exposed areas over a wheelchair patient's neck, arms or feet.

[0007] A further objective is to provide a blanket that is easier for another person, such as a hospital support staff member, to put on and to take off an upright user.

[0008] An additional objective is to provide a blanket constructed to be easier to put on and kept on by a stiff or impaired mobility wearer.

[0009] A related objective of the invention is to provide a blanket which is firmly held over and onto the user's arms during normal work and play activities by the seated user without the need to tie strings or use retaining clips, safety pins and the like.

[0010] A further objective of the invention is to provide a blanket which is easily and neatly folded into a pillow, allowing the user to create a symmetrical pillow for decoration or for use as a headrest, footrest, lumbar support, seat cushion or lap tray.

[0011] The pillow blanket is used for covering from neck to feet the user in an upright position. The pillow blanket comprises a blanket, foot pocket and pair of sleeves. The substantially rectangular blanket has a planar first surface and a planar second surface. The blanket also has two opposing first and second side edges and two opposing top and bottom edges that are shorter than the two opposing side edges. The blanket has a first rounded corner at the intersection of the bottom edge and the first side edge of the blanket. The blanket also has a second rounded corner at the intersection of the bottom edge and the second side edge of the blanket both for improving the result of folding the blanket into the foot pocket.

[0012] The blanket defines a pair of sleeve apertures in the half portion of the blanket adjacent to the top edge of the blanket. Each of the sleeve apertures has an oblong shape for facilitating freedom of arm movement within the sleeve. Each of the sleeve apertures has an oblique orientation relative to a horizontal centerline to facilitate arm movement. The horizontal centerline is defined by a line that runs through the pair of sleeves and is parallel to the top edge of the blanket. The first and second sleeve apertures are spaced apart along the horizontal centerline at a predetermined length so that the blanket lies flat across the chest of the user. The blanket also has a neck portion. The neck portion has predetermined length between each of the pair of sleeves and the to edge of the blanket so that the neck portion covers the user's neck without the need of fasteners.

[0013] The foot pocket comprises a pocket panel. The pocket panel has two opposing first and second edges and two opposing top and bottom edges. The pocket panel is connected to the blanket at the first edge, second edge, and bottom edge of the pocket panel. The bottom edge of the pocket panel coincides with both the middle third portion of and the bottom edge of the blanket for warming feet and for converting the blanket into a pillow. The width of the pocket panel is approximately a third of the width of the blanket.

[0014] A pair of first and second sleeves is connected to the perimeter of the first and second apertures on the blanket. The pair of first and second sleeves each includes an expandable first and second cuff for accommodating a variety of sleeve lengths and fist sizes.

[0015] These and other objects, advantages and features of the invention will be readily understood by a reading of the

following description in conjunction with the accompanying figures of the drawings wherein like reference numerals have been applied to designate like elements throughout the several views.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the pillow blanket of the present invention in use on a wheelchair;

[0017] **FIG. 2** is a rear side elevational view of an embodiment of the invention showing the foot pocket and open cuffs;

[0018] **FIG. 3** is a perspective view of an open pillow blanket, viewed from the opposite side shown in **FIG. 2**, showing the starting position in a process of folding the blanket into a pillow;

[0019] **FIG. 4** is a step, subsequent to the step in **FIG. 3**, which includes tucking the rounded corners into the pocket and folding the blanket lengthwise into thirds;

[0020] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a step, subsequent to the step in **FIG. 4**, which includes folding the first and second sleeves over the middle third portion of the blanket **12**; and

[0021] **FIG. 6** shows the last step of folding the blanket into four equal sections and tucking the folded pillow blanket into the foot pocket.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0022] With reference to the drawings, in particular to **FIGS. 1 and 2**, the pillow blanket **10** of the present invention, as opposed to a mere blanket, is depicted as including a blanket **12**, a foot pocket **18**, and a pair of first and second sleeves **70, 72**. The pillow blanket invention is used for putting on, taking off, and keeping on without fasteners, a covering from neck to feet of a user in an upright position. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the pillow blanket **10** is generally rectangular in shape and is made of any suitable material such as fleece.

[0023] The substantially rectangular blanket **12** of the pillow blanket **10** has a planar first face **20** and a planar second face **22**. The blanket **12** is defined by two opposing first and second side edges **24, 26** and two opposing top and bottom edges **28, 30** which are shorter than the two opposing side edges **24, 26**. The blanket **12** can be folded into three equal portions, the middle third portion **80** of blanket **12** is coincident with the longitudinal centerline **36** as best seen in **FIG. 4** and **FIG. 2**. The blanket **12** has a first rounded corner **32** at the intersection of the bottom edge **30** and the first side edge **24** of the blanket **12**. The blanket **12** also has a second rounded corner **34** at the intersection of the bottom edge **30** and the second side edge **26** of the blanket **12** for improving the ease of folding the blanket **12** into the foot pocket **18**.

[0024] The blanket **12** also defines a pair of first and second sleeve apertures **40, 50**. The sleeve apertures **40, 50** are located in the half portion of the blanket **12** adjacent to the top edge **28** of the blanket **12**. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, each of the first and second sleeve apertures **40, 50** have an oblong shape for facilitating improved freedom of arm movement within the sleeve. The oblong shape of each of the sleeve apertures **40, 50** has an oblique orientation relative to a horizontal centerline **38** to accommodate a wider range of arm movement. The horizontal centerline **38** defines a line that runs through the first sleeve aperture **40** and second sleeve aperture **50**, parallel to the top edge **28** of the said blanket **12** and perpendicular to the longitudinal centerline **36**.

[0025] The first and second sleeve apertures **70, 72** are spaced apart along the horizontal centerline **38** at a predetermined length, such as 2 feet, so that the blanket **12** lies flat across the chest of the user. The blanket **12** also provides a neck portion **52**. The neck portion has a predetermined length, such as one foot, between either the first or second sleeve apertures **40, 50** and the top edge **28** of the blanket **12** so that the neck portion **52** covers the users neck without the need for fasteners.

[0026] The foot pocket **18** of the pillow blanket **10** comprises a pocket panel **19**. The pocket panel **19** has two opposing first and second edges **62, 64** and two opposing top and bottom edges **68, 66** as best seen in **FIG. 2**. The pocket panel **19** is connected to the blanket **12** at the first edge **62**, second edge **64** and bottom edge **66** of the pocket panel **19**. The bottom edge **66** of the pocket panel **19** coincides with both the middle third portion **80** and the bottom edge **30** of the blanket **12** for warming feet and for converting the blanket into a pillow. In the preferred embodiment of the invention the pocket panel **19** has a square shape. Similarly, the width of the pocket panel **19** would be approximately ⅓ of the width of the blanket **12**, the distance of top edge **28** of the blanket **12**.

[0027] A pair of first and second sleeves **70,72** is also provided by the pillow blanket **10**. Each of the first and second sleeves **70** and **72** is connected to the perimeter of the respective first and second sleeve apertures **40, 50** on the blanket **12**. The first sleeve **70** includes and expandable first cuff **74** for accommodating a variety of sleeve lengths and cuff widths. Similarly the second sleeve **72** includes an expandable cuff **76** for narrow or wide wrists, and slender or swollen, arthritically knarled fists.

[0028] One working example for a preferred embodiment of the present invention provides for a blanket **12** having a top edge **28** of 60 inches and a length of 72 inches. Along the elongated axis of the first sleeve aperture **40** is a distance of 13 inches from the top of first sleeve aperture **42** to the bottom of first sleeve aperture **44**,. The second sleeve aperture **50** has the same 13 inches length but not necessarily the same orientation as the first sleeve aperture **40**. The first sleeve **70** has a length of 21 inches from the first sleeve aperture to the outer most edge of the first cuff **74**. The diameter of the expandable first cuff **74** is 5 inches and the length of the first cuff **74** is 2.5 inches. The spaced apart distance of the chest portion **54** measured between the first sleeve aperture **40** and the second sleeve aperture **50** is 24 inches. The neck portion **52** of the blanket from the horizontal centerline **38** to the top edge **28** of the blanket is 12 inches. The pocket panel **19** of the foot pocket **18** has first and second edge **62, 64** distances of 18 inches. The top edge **68** and bottom edge **66** would also have distance of 18 inches.

[0029] One preferred way of making the foot pocket **18** is to provide a blanket **12** having a top edge **28** of 60 inches, a length of 72 inches, first and second rounded corners **32**,

34 and an extended flap in the outline of the pocket panel **19** with a height of 18 inches and a length of 18 inches. Next, fold the pocket panel **19** upwardly and stitch the pocket panel **19** to the blanket **12** at the first edge **62** and the second edge **64** of the pocket panel **19**. The folded bottom edge **66** of the pocket panel **19** has a unitary connection with the blanket **12**; the top edge **68** of the pocket panel **19** is left unsecured for receiving the user's feet.

[**0030**] **FIGS. 3 through 6** show a preferred method for converting a blanket into a pillow comprising the following steps. First provide a pillow blanket **10** as described above and as shown in **FIG. 2**. Next, lay out the pillow blanket **10** with the planar first face **20** contacting the ground and the first and second sleeves **70, 72** contacting the ground and extending away from each of the sleeves **70, 72**. As shown in **FIG. 3**, fold over the entire foot pocket **18** onto the planar second face **22** of the blanket **12**. Then fold the pillow blanket **10** into three lengthwise portions with the first side edge **24** and second side edge **26** of the blanket **12** placed over the middle third portion **80** of the blanket **12** as shown in **FIG. 4**. Tuck the first rounded corner **32** and the second rounded corner **34** into the foot pocket **18**. As shown in **FIG. 5**, fold the first and second sleeves **70, 72** over the middle third portion **80** of the blanket **12**. As shown in **FIG. 6**, fold the blanket into lengths substantially similar to the length of foot pocket **18**. Finally tuck the folded blanket into the foot pocket **18**. The result is a pillow having a smooth, symmetrical shape for decoration or use as a headrest, footrest, lumbar support, seat cushion or lap tray.

[**0031**] To put on or wear the pillow blanket, the user is presented with a view substantially similar to the view of **FIG. 2** with the foot pocket **18** facing the user and the pair of first and second sleeves **40,50** extending outwardly away from the user. The user's feet are placed inside the foot pocket **18** and the two remaining rounded corners **32,34** of the blanket **12** are tucked inside the foot pocket **18** behind the calves of the user's legs. The planar first face **20** of the blanket **12** from an open, unfolded position is placed over the user's anterior as shown in **FIGS. 2 and 1**. The pocket panel **19** faces the user. The first sleeve **70** and the second sleeve **72** extend away from the user and the planar second face **22** of the pillow blanket **10**. The arms of the user are extended through the first and second sleeves **70, 72**. The first cuff **74** and second cuff **76** can be placed anywhere along the arms from the wrist up to bicep depending upon how warm and how active the user wants to be. The sleeves **70, 72** and the cuff **74, 76** serve as the primary means of keeping the blanket on the user without the use of other fasteners which may be hard to reach. The neck portion **52** of the blanket **12** is placed with top edge **28** of the blanket **12** under the chin of the user.

[**0032**] To use the foot pocket **18** feature, insert both of the user's feet into the foot pocket **18** with the pocket panel **19** pressed against the calves of the user. Then tuck the first rounded corner **32** and second rounded corner **34** between the user's calves and the pocket panel **19**. Tucking the corners **32, 34** into the pocket panel **19** is especially advantageous for reducing the chance of the bottom edge **30** of the blanket **12** dragging on the floor or getting caught by or in the front wheels of the wheel chair.

[**0033**] The pillow blanket **10** construction of the invention results in a blanket **12** which is worn over a seated user's anterior and lateral sides extending from over the neck, chest, arms, lap, legs, through the feet. The wide cuffed sleeve offers one-size-fits-all convenience. The wide cuffed sleeve can be worn as a full sleeve or half sleeve depending upon the warmth desired. The wide cuffed sleeve provides mobility for hands-on activities such as crocheting or playing cards. The wide cuffed sleeve helps keep the blanket from falling onto the ground and thus reduces the inconvenience of lost self-sufficiency waiting for a hospital staff member to come to the room to retrieve the blanket from the floor. Worse yet, the fallen blanket may become a contaminated reservoir of germs to the user from laying upon an unsanitary public hospital or nursing home floor and subsequently being held close to the user.

[**0034**] The foot pocket **18** allows the user to quickly put the pillow blanket **10** away after use. It allows a user to create a smooth, neat, symmetrical pillow for decorative or functional uses such as a headrest, footrest, lumbar support, seat cushion or lap tray.

[**0035**] The foot pocket **18** provides the blanket **12** with additional warmth by way of a confined area for the user's feet. Alternatively, the foot pocket **18** could be used to provide storage if not used for foot warmth. The two rounded corners **32,34** on the blanket **12** itself allow the user to fold the blanket **12** into a pillow more easily to form a more symmetrical pillow.

[**0036**] The use of the fleece pillow blanket **10** material maximizes warmth and minimizes the bulk and weight of the insulating material used. The fleece blanket provides durable performance and advantageous washing qualities for a longer product life. The fleece blanket offers a soft nap for use as a blanket or pillow and is also helpful in cool indoor areas when conserving energy with a lower than normal temperature thermostat setting.

[**0037**] Even when used on relatively immobile and inflexible users, the pillow blanket **10** is easy to put on, and it stays on until the wearer or the hospital support staff intentionally removes it. The use of clips, straps, or other attachment means needed to keep the blanket on the user is avoided.

[**0038**] The pillow blanket **10** of the present invention is easily made from conventional fabrics and materials. Available materials such as fleece or POLAR FLEECE™, provide a high insulating value in a thin layer, are readily incorporated into the blanket.

[**0039**] Another preferred alternative embodiment of the invention provide a blanket **12** defining first and second sleeve apertures **40, 50** having a substantially vertical orientation relative to the horizontal centerline **38**.

[**0040**] It is anticipated that various changes and modifications may be made in the construction, arrangement and method of construction of the pillow blanket disclosed herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the following claims:

What is claimed is:

1. A pillow blanket for covering from neck to feet a user in an upright position, said pillow blanket comprising:

a substantially rectangular blanket having a planar first surface and a planar second surface, said blanket having two opposing first and second side edges and two opposing top and bottom edges which are shorter than said two opposing side edges, said blanket having a middle third portion; and

a foot pocket comprising a pocket panel having two opposing first and second edges and two opposing top and bottom edges, said pocket panel being connected to

said blanket at said first edge, second edge and bottom edge of said pocket panel, said bottom edge of said pocket panel coinciding with both the middle third portion of said blanket and the bottom edge of said blanket for warming feet and for converting the blanket into a pillow.

2. The pillow blanket of claim 1 wherein said blanket has a first rounded corner at the intersection of said bottom edge and said first side edge of said blanket, and said blanket has a second rounded corner at the intersection of said bottom edge and said second side edge of said blanket for improving the ease of folding said blanket into said foot pocket.

3. The pillow blanket of claim 1 wherein the width of said pocket panel is approximately a third of the width of said blanket.

4. The pillow blanket of claim 3 wherein said pocket panel has a square shape.

5. The pillow blanket of claim 1 further comprises a pair of sleeves, said blanket defines a pair of sleeve apertures in the half portion of said blanket adjacent to said top edge of said blanket, each of said sleeve apertures has an oblong shape for facilitating improved freedom of arm movement within said sleeve, and each of said pair of sleeves includes a first end and a second end, the first end of each sleeve is connected to the perimeter of the respective sleeve aperture on said blanket.

6. The pillow blanket of claim 5 wherein said oblong shaped aperture has an oblique orientation relative to a horizontal center line to facilitate freedom of arm movement, the horizontal center line is defined by a line that runs through said pair of sleeves and is parallel to said top edge of said blanket.

7. The pillow blanket of claim 5 wherein said sleeve aperture has a substantially vertical orientation relative to the horizontal centerline.

8. The pillow blanket of claim 5 wherein said pair of sleeves each includes an expandable cuff for accommodating a variety of sleeve lengths and cuff widths.

9. The pillow blanket of claim 5 wherein said sleeve apertures are spaced apart along said horizontal centerline at a predetermined length so that said blanket lies flat across the chest of the user.

10. The pillow blanket of claim 5 wherein said blanket has a neck portion, said neck portion has a predetermined length between a sleeve aperture and said top edge of said blanket so that said neck portion covers the user's neck without the need of straps or other fasteners.

11. A pillow blanket for covering from neck to feet a user in an upright position, said pillow blanket comprises:

a substantially rectangular blanket has a planar first face and a planar second face, said blanket has two opposing first and second side edges and two opposing top and bottom edges which are shorter than said two opposing side edges, said blanket has a middle third portion,

said blanket has a first rounded corner at the intersection of said bottom edge and said first side edge of said blanket, and said blanket has a second rounded corner at the intersection of said bottom edge and said second side edge of said blanket for improving the ease of folding said blanket into said foot pocket,

said blanket defines a pair of sleeve apertures in the half portion of said blanket adjacent to said top edge of said blanket, each of said apertures has an oblong shape for facilitating improved freedom of arm movement,

each of said sleeve apertures has an oblique orientation relative to a horizontal center line to facilitate freedom of arm movement, the horizontal center line is defined by a line that runs through said pair of sleeve apertures and is parallel to said top edge of said blanket,

each of said sleeve apertures are spaced apart along said horizontal centerline at a predetermined length so that said blanket lies flat across the chest of the user, and

said blanket has a neck portion, said neck portion has a predetermined length between one of said sleeve apertures and said top edge of said blanket so that said neck portion covers the user's neck without the need for fasteners;

a foot pocket comprises a pocket panel, said pocket panel has two opposing first and second edges and two opposing top and bottom edges, said pocket panel being connected to said blanket at said first edge, second edge and bottom edge of said pocket panel, said bottom edge of said pocket panel coinciding with both the middle third portion of said blanket and the bottom edge of said blanket for warming feet and for converting the blanket into a pillow, said pocket panel has a square shape, and the width of said pocket panel is approximately a third of the width of said blanket; and

a pair of sleeves, each of said pair of sleeves includes a first end and a second end, the first end of each sleeve is connected to the perimeter of the respective sleeve aperture on said blanket, and

the second end of each sleeve includes an expandable cuff for accommodating a variety of sleeve lengths and cuff widths.

12. A method for converting a blanket into a pillow comprising the steps of:

providing a pillow blanket;

positioning said pillow blanket into an open position with the planar first face contacting the ground and the pair of sleeves contacting the ground;

folding over the foot pocket onto the planar second face of the blanket;

folding the pillow blanket into three lengthwise portions with the first side edge and the second side edge of the blanket placed over the middle third portion of the blanket;

tucking the first and second rounded corners of the blanket into the foot pocket;

folding the first and second sleeves over the middle third portion of the blanket;

folding the blanket into lengths substantially similar to the length of the foot pocket; and

tucking the folded blanket into the foot pocket.

* * * * *