

Health Tech: Eric Race of Atlas Mobility on how their technology can make an important impact on our overall wellness

By Dr. Sonya Reddy / 12 min read / Dec 6, 2025

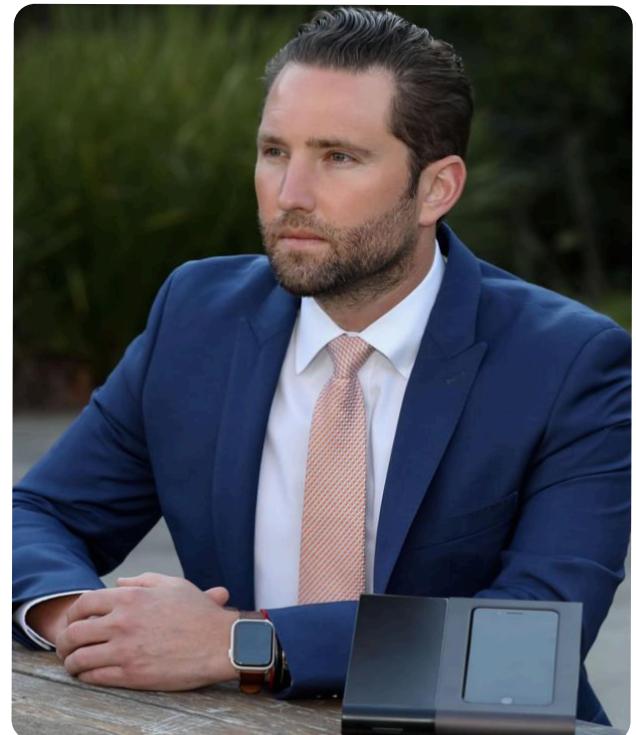
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Eric Race is the founder and CEO of Atlas Mobility, a company based out of San Francisco that contracts safe patient handling services to the medical industry. He is primarily responsible in overseeing general management and operations, working one on one with facilities to improve their safe patient handling programs. Eric has built his passion of Safe Patient Handling and Movement working in the clinical setting, with hands on experience in his previous professions as a firefighter and lift technician.

Prior to founding Atlas, Eric most recently held a position at Stockton Fire Department for the City of Stockton. In his profession he experienced a full view of patient care in the clinical setting, from responding to 911 calls to assisting in hospital emergency rooms. He also assisted as a lift technician working in the ER and Level 1 trauma centers of Contra Costa County, as well as managed the implementation of John Muir's lift team (weekend nights program).

Before we dive in, our readers would love to learn a bit more about you. Can you tell us a bit about your childhood backstory and how you grew up?

I grew up in the East Bay Area, just outside of San Francisco, California, in a family where curiosity and problem-solving were part of daily life. My mom worked for NASA, SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence), and JPL (Jet Propulsion Laboratory) specializing in planetary protection for Mars missions; her job was literally to make sure we didn't contaminate other worlds and they didn't contaminate Earth. My dad, on the other hand, was a serial entrepreneur known for turning around consumer product companies such as Sony-PlayStation, Reebok-Pump Shoes, and Worlds of Wonder-Teddy Ruxpin. From them, I inherited both scientific discipline and entrepreneurial risk-taking; two mindsets that ended up defining my life and career.

As a kid, I was obsessed with how things worked. I'd take apart radios, engines, and anything mechanical I could get my hands on. But I was equally drawn to public service. I wanted to help people directly, which led me to become a firefighter and paramedic. That experience taught me how to operate under pressure, how to trust your team, and how to put safety above everything else. Those lessons have shaped my entire career.

Today, as Founder // CEO of Atlas Mobility, I've brought those values full circle. We help hospitals nationwide reduce caregiver injuries and improve patient outcomes by combining expert clinical support with cutting-edge mobility technology. The same principles that guided me in emergency response: safety, teamwork, and human performance are now what guide me in transforming the way hospitals care for both patients and caregivers.

Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you began your career?

For as long as I can remember, I wanted to be a firefighter. Every educational and professional step I took was focused on that goal. I studied fire science, earned my paramedic certification, and trained relentlessly for years. Eventually, I landed my dream job with the City of Stockton Fire Department, a Class 1 fire department known for its excellence and nationally respected emergency response. It was everything I had worked toward: a career built around service, teamwork, and the ability to make a difference in people's lives during their most vulnerable moments.

Then, unexpectedly, everything changed. During the recession, the City of Stockton faced severe financial challenges, and almost overnight, my job and the future I had spent years building, disappeared. It was a moment that forced me to redefine who I was and what I stood for. I had to ask myself: What do I do when the thing I've worked my entire life for is no longer there?

In the midst of that loss, I found opportunity. I began looking back at my early experiences in hospitals and emergency response, and I saw a pattern: the same kinds of safety and mobility challenges that existed in the field were also putting caregivers and patients at risk inside hospitals. That realization became the seed of Atlas Mobility.

Losing my job with the City of Stockton was one of the hardest moments of my life, but it taught me something important: if you stay true to your roots and your core values (protecting others, serving with purpose, and solving real problems), then new opportunities always emerge. That's exactly what happened. What started as a personal setback became the foundation for a company now helping to protect tens of thousands of caregivers and hundreds of thousands of patients annually.

None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful toward who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story about that?

I've been fortunate to have incredible mentors at every stage of my life. My parents were my first. My mom's work at NASA taught me the importance of precision, responsibility, and the idea that even small details matter when the stakes are high. My dad, a CEO and serial entrepreneur, showed me what it means to take calculated risks. This allowed me to look at challenges not as barriers but as invitations to build something better. Those early lessons gave me the foundation for how I approach both business and leadership.

Later in my career, I had the privilege of being mentored by Jim Mendonsa, a respected leader in the fire service and one of the pioneers behind California's original Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) program. Jim helped develop the state's first heavy-rescue training programs at Camp Parks and was instrumental in establishing the standards that today's first responders still rely on. What made him stand out wasn't just his technical expertise; it was his composure, clarity, and consistency under pressure.

I once asked Jim how he managed to stay calm when everything around him was chaos, whether in a rescue operation or a leadership crisis. He told me, "To be at the tip of the spear, you have to cut through a lot of fat." That lesson changed how I think about leadership. From my days as a firefighter to leading a national healthcare service and technology company, that advice remains my anchor. Leadership isn't about being the loudest voice in the room but about being the most stable one who helps others find their footing when everything else feels uncertain.

Can you please give us your favorite "Life Lesson Quote"? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

"If not now, then when? If not me, then who?"

That quote has been my compass throughout life. It's a call to action and a reminder that waiting for perfect conditions often means never starting at all. In my early years as a firefighter and paramedic, hesitation could literally cost lives. You learn to trust your preparation, act decisively, and adapt as you go.

That same mindset carried over when I founded Atlas Mobility. We were trying to solve deeply rooted problems in healthcare; issues that everyone acknowledged but few dared to tackle. There was no perfect time to start building technology that would reimagine how patients are moved, tracked, and protected. But the need was immediate. That quote pushed me to move forward even when the path wasn't fully clear. It reinforced that action is the only way to turn ideas into results.

You are a successful business leader. Which three character traits do you think were most instrumental to your success? Can you please share a story or example for each?

Curiosity: My whole career is built on asking "why" one more time than most people do. As a paramedic, curiosity meant learning how the body worked under stress. In healthcare innovation, it means understanding how entire hospital systems function and where they break down. Curiosity led me to create the Atlas Mobility Monitoring System when I realized hospitals were tracking every vital sign except the one that predicts the most

harm: patient movement or mobility.

Grit: Transforming healthcare is not glamorous work. It's full of regulatory hurdles, culture change, and slow-moving systems. There were moments when it felt like pushing a boulder uphill. But grit and the willingness to persist long after the excitement wears off is what gets you through those years of quiet progress.

Purpose: I believe in "doing well by doing good." Atlas Mobility's mission embodies that concept: "Enhancing patient safety while preventing employee injury." It gives our work a moral center. When you're building a company that exists to make people safer, your purpose becomes your greatest competitive advantage.

Let's now shift to the main part of our discussion about the technology or medical devices that you are helping to create that can make a positive impact on our wellness. To begin, which particular problems are you aiming to solve?

Healthcare is filled with incredible people but imperfect systems. We're focused on solving three of the most preventable, costly, and litigated problems in modern hospitals:

- **Caregiver injuries caused by unsafe lifting and repositioning of patients.**
- **Hospital-acquired pressure injuries that occur when immobile patients aren't turned frequently enough.**
- **Preventable patient falls, which extend hospital stays and drive up costs.**

These in turn help to reduce patient Length of Stay (LOS) which is one of the most powerful indicators of both patient outcomes and hospital efficiency.

Movement is not optional in healing; it's therapeutic. When patients lie still, they decline rapidly, muscle strength drops, lungs weaken, and skin breaks down. But when mobility becomes part of the treatment plan, patients recover faster, stay safer, and go home sooner.

For decades, hospitals have measured everything: heart rate, blood oxygen, blood pressure, but not the one thing that underpins every recovery: mobility. How a patient moves, how often they're turned, and how long they stay in the hospital has a huge impact on survival and clinical outcomes, yet it's rarely tracked with any precision.

How do you think your technology can address this?

The Atlas Mobility Monitoring System was created to make the invisible visible. It makes patient movement measurable by giving hospitals data on how, when, and how often patients are being mobilized.

Using advanced sensors, the bedside monitor allows the care team to track the quality and frequency of every patient turn or reposition. It brings clarity to what was once guesswork, providing caregivers proof that movement is happening, or alerting them when it isn't. That single insight transforms care. Suddenly, mobility becomes measurable, accountable, and actionable.

Technology alone doesn't solve the problems. Pairing the data with Atlas Mobility's hands-on support at the bedside and staff training creates real change. This total mobility approach ensures patients are moved safely, reduces strain on caregivers, and lowers the risk of falls and injuries.

What we're doing is grounded in a simple truth: mobility is medicine. It restores dignity to patients by ensuring their recovery isn't passive but participatory. It protects caregivers by aligning safe movement with smart, data-supported practices.

In the same way that defibrillators revolutionized cardiac care and ventilators redefined respiratory support, mobility monitoring is redefining what it means to treat immobility. When we make movement visible, we make healing possible.

Can you tell us the backstory about what inspired you to originally feel passionate about this cause?

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How do you think this might change the world?

Hospital-acquired pressure injuries (HAPIs) are one of the most underreported crises in healthcare. They claim more lives in the U.S. each year than car accidents or gun violence at roughly 60,000 deaths annually, yet they rarely make headlines.

By using technology to make mobility measurable and proactive, we can eliminate a leading cause of preventable harm. The ripple effects go beyond safety. Hospitals save millions in costs. Nurses stay healthier and longer in their careers. Patients recover faster and with fewer complications.

If we do this right, it could become one of the most significant quality-of-life improvements in modern medicine, comparable to the introduction of seatbelts or surgical checklists. We're not just changing hospital protocols. We're redefining what "safe care" means for the 21st century.

Keeping "Black Mirror" and the "Law of Unintended Consequences" in mind, can you see any potential drawbacks about this technology that people should think more deeply about?

Transparency can be uncomfortable, especially in environments like healthcare, where people are doing their best under immense pressure. When you introduce technology that shows where care isn't being delivered as intended, it can feel exposing. But that discomfort is what leads to progress. Data should empower, not punish.

Privacy is another consideration. As we explore new use cases for mobility sensors, such as remote monitoring for dementia care or post-acute patients, we must balance compassion with consent. Technology should enhance dignity, not compromise it. Responsible innovation means always asking not just can we, but should we? Our approach at Atlas Mobility is rooted in empathy. We use technology to make care safer. Not more mechanical, but more human.

Based on your experience and success, can you please share “Five things you need to know to successfully create technology that can make a positive social impact”?

- 1)** Build for the decade, not the quarter. Real impact takes time, especially in healthcare, where change requires evidence and trust.
- 2)** Design for real-world use. If your device can't survive the chaos of a busy hospital floor, it's not ready.
- 3)** Integrate with the system. Great ideas fail when they don't fit into the ecosystem, from EHRs to clinical workflows.
- 4)** Respect the rules. Compliance with FDA, HIPAA, and safety standards is important to protect lives.
- 5)** Think BIG. The biggest social impact happens when your idea is scalable enough to be shared and adopted widely.

If you could tell other young people one thing about why they should consider making a positive impact, like you, what would you tell them?

The most fulfilling work you'll ever do is the kind that helps others. "Doing well by doing good" should be the business model. Purpose creates endurance. When your mission has meaning, setbacks become fuel, not friction. The world needs solutions that solve real human problems. Whether it's healthcare, sustainability, or education, choose a problem that matters to you and commit to it for the long run. That's where true success and legacy live.

Is there a person in the world, or in the US, with whom you would like to have a private breakfast or lunch, and why?

Without question, Elon Musk.

Elon has a rare ability to see humanity not as it is, but as it could be: to look at systems that seem immovable and reimagine them from first principles. He's done it with transportation, energy, and space. I believe one of the next great frontiers is one that will most directly determine human quality of life and that is healthcare.

We're entering an era where AI, humanoid robotics, and eventually AGI will redefine what's possible with healthcare. Machines will not replace caregivers, but amplify them, taking on the physical strain, monitoring patterns invisible to the human eye, and allowing big data to be paired with empathy at the center of care. If I could have breakfast with Elon, I'd want to talk about how we design the bridge between human intelligence and artificial intelligence in a way that serves life, not just efficiency and bottom-line impact.

Because the same mindset that took us to Mars can help us rediscover something just as profound here on Earth: a healthcare system worthy of the people it's meant to protect.

Elon once said that he builds things to help "extend the light of consciousness." I'd tell him that's exactly what we're trying to do here on Earth, one patient at a time.

How can our readers further follow your work online?

Readers can visit www.AtlasMobility.com to learn more about our technology and mission. I also share insights and updates on LinkedIn regarding the future of hospital wearable technology, caregiver safety, and the evolving role of mobility in healthcare.

Our vision is simple: a world where caregivers never have to choose between helping a patient and protecting themselves. Technology, when done right, makes that possible.

**Thank you so much for sharing these important insights.
We wish you continued success and good health!**