



Medela Opens New U.S. Manufacturing Line for Critical Portable Suction Systems Aiding Hospital Ventilator Support During the COVID-19 Crisis

- 10,000 Vario 18 AC Portable Suction Pumps to be Manufactured in the U.S. beginning in June 2020

McHenry, Ill., May 19, 2020 – Medela LLC, today announced the opening of a new manufacturing line in the U.S. for its [Vario 18 AC Portable Suction Pumps](#), that provide crucial suction and fluid removal during respiratory treatment provided by ventilators. Medela will produce 10,000 units beginning in June from its Americas headquarters in McHenry, Illinois to help meet the ongoing needs of hospitals and other healthcare facilities throughout North America.

Traditionally, hospitals ensure a patient's airway is clear by utilizing suction that relies on central wall piped vacuum. According to information recently published by NHS¹, hospitals should not use piped vacuum to support infectious disease units (IDU) to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. With hospitals and other treatment facilities experiencing overcrowding, added beds, and new layout configurations, there is a need for light-weight, portable, and easy to maneuver portable suction equipment. Additionally, the Vario 18 is equipped with a disposable virus filter and fluid collection system, which may reduce the risk of infection for caregivers and patients.

As COVID-19 continues to spread, ventilator and non-ventilator manufacturers scramble to produce more units, with approximately 60,000^{2,3} COVID-19 sufferers having received ventilator support in the U.S. to date. While mechanical ventilators are essential for patients in an intensive care unit, so is accompanying suction pump equipment for the removal of lung secretions generated from the inflammatory process of the COVID-19 virus.

“Now is the time to assess what we have learned from this healthcare crisis so far, so we can better support hospitals and clinicians by providing the right equipment to aid in recovery and preparedness for any potential resurgence in the fall,” said Melissa Gonzales, RN, BSN, and executive vice president of Medela Americas. “The importance of portable suction not tied to central wall vacuum sources is critical. Coronavirus patients experience fluid pooling in the lungs and pairing ventilators with portable suction technology like the Vario 18 AC is crucial to ensuring pulmonary hygiene to support patient care and recovery.”

Medela has been a pioneer in suction technology for nearly 60 years and manufactures a suite of medical suction pumps that are essential for the treatment of COVID-19 patients who require hospital or intensive medical care. The Vario 18 AC is light weight and features reusable or disposable collection systems. It also offers a virus filter to prevent cross contamination in the hospital setting. The low noise level of the suction pump allows staff to stay focused wherever suctioning takes place, provides easy setup and handling with variable vacuum levels that are simple to adjust, and features a safety push-button to prevent accidental re-adjustment. The Vario 18 AC is widely used in Europe and manufactured only in Switzerland thus far.

¹ https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2020/03/C0131-Design-note_COVID-19-ward-for-intubated-patients_1-April-MR2.pdf

² <https://coronavirus.ihp.edu/map.html>

³ [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/clinical-management-of-severe-acute-respiratory-infection-when-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/clinical-management-of-severe-acute-respiratory-infection-when-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected)



Medela is now building a new line in the U.S. and ramping up production to help address the coronavirus pandemic in North America.

“We saw the needs of hospitals across the globe and began efforts to ramp up production already in March,” said Annette Bröls, chief executive officer of Medela worldwide. “However, the demand continues to outpace our capacity by far. This is why we decided to build this additional production line in the United States help address the coronavirus pandemic in North America.”

To learn more about ways Medela is aiding COVID-19 efforts visit the: [COVID-19 information hub](#).

For information about the Vario 18 AC access and availability visit: [MedelaHealthCare.us](#).

About Medela LLC

Medela’s U.S.-based manufacturing and development facility is headquartered in McHenry, Illinois, with an additional Canadian-based warehouse and service facility in Mississauga, Ontario. Medela Healthcare is a global manufacturer of medical vacuum solutions that are respected and trusted by doctors and healthcare professionals from around the world. Medela’s Healthcare business seeks to improve the lives of patients, doctors and hospital staffs through constant innovation and our passion to understand the challenges that patients and clinicians face in their daily lives. Life is precious and needs passionate people – like those at Medela – to provide progressive care. For more information, visit www.medela.com.