

The Medical Technology Community Stands with Patients

Access to Medical Technologies and Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

15 April 2020

These are difficult times for all of us. The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any viral outbreak we have ever seen, and health and care systems are being tested like never before. Large parts of the world came to a standstill to stop the new coronavirus from spreading. On the other end, people who become infected, people who get acutely sick and people living with chronic conditions need effective care to continue.

We would like to reassure the patient communities that the priority of the medical technology manufacturers to serve patients has not shifted an inch. We hear well your worries and we want to reaffirm our commitment that we will get through this crisis together.

Providing the necessary medical supplies for patients and healthcare professionals

Since the very beginning of the outbreak, the medical technology community has been working around the clock to provide the needed medical technologies to fight COVID-19. Delivering new COVID-19 related tests, personal protective equipment, such as masks, gloves and gowns, respiratory equipment such as ventilators as well as many other equipment needed in 'Intensive Care Units' have been our core focus to allow the diagnosis and treatment of infected people.

Companies have been scaling up production as much as possible to meet the demand for medical supplies:

- Production facilities are kept open and operational. They are running maximum shifts, whilst workers practice remote working and social distancing in the manufacturing sites;
- Supply chains around the globe are being secured and strengthened as much as possible so that all materials, components and accessories are available, whilst working in the context of lockdowns in many countries;
- The distribution of equipment via land and air freights is being organised, whilst border restrictions are in place in many areas.

In a combined effort, we are mobilising everything we can to help save the lives of people that become infected and protect the lives of those who care for them.

Supporting vulnerable groups

Governments are being asked to take difficult decisions and shift priorities and resources to where they are most needed. In this uncertainty, it is important to also acknowledge that certain patient communities are

particularly vulnerable, such as those living with chronic or rare diseases. Those communities rely on medical technologies, medicines as well as on access to healthcare services on a regular basis. They must not be forgotten but be supported by all means.

Medical technologies manufacturers remain fully committed to do the utmost possible on their end to ease the difficulties that those patient communities might face in these challenging times and to ensure that needed medical technologies and services are available without disruptions.

It is important that people continue to reach out to their doctors and hospitals in order to seek treatment, when needed. Nevertheless, the medical technology community is also committed to strengthen digital solutions that support self-management, remote and home care. People and health care systems rely more than ever on these approaches in times of severe confinement measures.

Partnerships with international, European and regional actors

The medical technology industry works tirelessly to manufacture and distribute essential medical technologies. We will also continue to work diligently with the WHO, the European Institutions and national governments, to ensure that health systems are fortified to combat COVID-19. We encourage and support the efforts of the European Union to coordinate national activities of the member states. Together, we need to make sure that medical technologies are available and accessible where and when they are needed.

To that end, we emphasise that the existing dialogue between the patient community and the medical technology industry should continue and be deepened, so that critical questions are answered and we work together to manage these difficult weeks and months in the best way possible. Further on, we should jointly assess and draw lessons from this painful health crisis with the aim to come out of it strengthened and more resilient to face the future.

About MedTech Europe

MedTech Europe is the European trade association for the medical technology industry including diagnostics, medical devices and digital health. Our members are national, European and multinational companies as well as a network of national medical technology associations who research, develop, manufacture, distribute and supply health-related technologies, services and solutions.

For more information on how the medical technology community engages in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, please see MedTech Europe's Information Hub

<https://www.medtecheurope.org/covid-19-information-hub/>