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Belimed Steam Sterilizers now announced compatible for crisis strategy decontamination of specific single-use N95 respirators by industry-leading manufacturer 3M

ZUG, SWITZERLAND / CHARLESTON, SC (October 1st, 2020) – Can N95 respirators be decontaminated in a steam sterilization cycle for reuse in situations of severe personal protective equipment (PPE) shortage? That question has been explored through collaboration between a world-leading respirator manufacturer, 3M, and a global leader in sterilization solutions, Belimed.

“The expert team at 3M was open-minded and very supportive in evaluating this question,” says Markus Auly, Head of Scientific Affairs at Belimed. “After two rounds of testing six different respirator models steam-treated by Belimed, and a thorough technical analysis of the data, 3M felt confident in the compatibility of the process with certain respirator models.”

3M’s latest version of the Technical Bulletin confirms that one standard 250° F sterilization cycle in Belimed Medical Steam Sterilizer models MST-H or MST-V does not compromise the form, fit, and function of their flat-fold respirators.

The benefit of evaluating and confirming compatibility with this standard steam sterilization process is that it is the gold standard among decontamination technologies because of its high microbicidal efficacy, even in the presence of residual soils. From a resource standpoint, it is safe to use due to freedom from toxic residues, easy to administer, and has low processing costs, using only water and electricity.

Steam decontamination of N95 respirators will double the availability of 3M flat-fold respirators during a supply crisis in any healthcare center that has a Belimed Steam Sterilizer MST-H or MST-V.

During the global shortage in the last months, the supply of N95 respirators in all regions of the world, including healthcare leaders like the USA, Germany, or the Netherlands, has been tight. It soon became clear that disposing of single-use respirators after one use (standard protocol) could leave health care workers exposed due to lack of supply.

Hospitals around the world are seeking options to provide respirators to their employees to help reduce their risk of exposure when working with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients. The solutions include extended use and/or contingency reprocessing methods, both of which have their challenges.

Previously, Belimed had published a white paper explaining these reprocessing options that various countries were adopting to alleviate the scarcity of disposable personal protective equipment (PPE) like N95 respirators, surgical gowns, or face shields. The goal was to share this information with healthcare facilities across the globe. The whitepaper can be downloaded on the Belimed website.

Now, with the evaluation by 3M of steam decontamination of N95 respirators, specific programmed cycles of the Belimed Steam Sterilizer MST-H or MST-V were determined to be compatible with specific 3M respirator models.

“Belimed’s number one priority has always been to protect the health and safety of hospital staff and their patients. With our expertise in sterile processing we want to contribute our part and create certainty in uncertain times,” says Dominik Arnold, CEO of Belimed. “Now our customers and the healthcare community can be confident to have a more reliable fall-back solution in times of short supply of N95 respirators.”

For more information please check 3M’s technical bulletin “Decontamination of 3M Filtering Facepiece Respirators, such as N95 Respirators, in the United States – Considerations” and Belimed’s website (www.belimed.com).

About Belimed

Belimed Inc. is a leading supplier of medical and surgical instrument sterilization, disinfection, and cleaning products and services. The company, with its global headquarters in Zug (Switzerland) and US headquarters in Charleston, SC, has offices in 9 countries around the world and is represented in over 80 countries thanks to a strong network. For more than 50 years we have been continually evolving our technology-driven portfolio; innovating ways to improve reliability, efficiency, and sustainability in sterile processing departments.

As engineers of confidence, we build trust and value by precisely identifying and resolving customer challenges and optimizing requirements to improve their overall work environment. Our complete spectrum of sterile workflow solutions includes planning and design, market-leading equipment, consumables, servicing, data connectivity, education and training.

Our focus is to instill living, breathing, confidence within our customers; empowering them to advance medical care and protect the lives of patients and staff.

For more information, visit www.belimed.com.