

GENERAL SURGERY NEWS

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IN BRIEF

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CareFusion's Focus: Medical Devices Supporting Patient Care and Safety

San Diego, Calif.—The biggest medical company you've never heard of is ready to lose its anonymity.

Although CareFusion Corporation is brand new, it already employs more than 15,000 people globally who do business in 120 different countries. Its mature product lines and newer offerings are focused on improving patient care and safety.

Jim Mazzola, senior vice president of marketing and communication, explained, "The parent company, Cardinal Health, is primarily a North American distribution business, while CareFusion is primarily a global medical device business. We determined that these very different businesses would both be better positioned in their respective markets if they were separate and could therefore invest independently to grow."

CareFusion's product lines already are well known and widely used in hospitals worldwide. "They run the gamut from surgical instruments, to ventilators, to IV infusion pumps," Mr. Mazzola explained. One example is Pyxis, "an automated dispensing and patient identification system that secures pharmaceuticals on the nursing floor, cutting down the time it takes to deliver drugs to where they are needed—at the patient's bedside." The system greatly reduces the possibility of medication errors, an important consideration given the extent of annual adverse drug events among hospitalized patients.

Alaris is CareFusion's line of infusion pumps. Among its many innovations, "Alaris introduced 'guardrails safety software,' which allows hospitals to set parameters for medication infusions. If a nurse accidentally enters a value that is above or below the recommended dosage—for example, 2.0 is entered as 20.0—it will stop the infusion."

CareFusion also markets AVEA and Pulmonetic Systems, a line of ventilation and respiratory products, and will shortly introduce a full-function ventilator that weighs only 9 lb. The EnVe Palmtop Ventilator, or PTV, is an advance in patient care and safety because it allows the patient to be moved without having to be switched from a bedside ventilator to a transport ventilator. Studies have found that changing ventilators increases the risk for ventilator-associated pneumonia.

Diversified Line of Products

CareFusion, whose international headquarters is located here, also markets the V. Mueller line of surgical instruments; monitoring and diagnostic products for neurology; products for interventional medicine; ChloraPrep, which helps reduce surgical site and bloodstream infections; and MedMined, an infection surveillance software service that oversees the threat of hospital-acquired infections and helps hospitals refine their practices to avoid them.

CareFusion has plans to introduce nearly 40 new products in the next 18 months. "Some of our new offerings will connect existing products, such as Pyxis and MedMined, to further enhance safety and help hospitals measurably improve the care they deliver.

"We are in business in many parts of the world," Mr. Mazzola said. "Although these markets can be very different, many of the challenges hospitals face are really the same. Adaptation and sensitivity to these local markets come into play, but patient safety and improving patient care are important everywhere."

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