



7 May 2021

Dear Clerk Crandall,

Medicom would like to submit the following information to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in light of its study of single-use plastics.

### Background

The Medicom Group, headquartered in Point-Claire, Québec, is one of the world's leading manufacturers and distributors of high-quality, single-use, preventive and infection control products for the medical, dental, industrial, animal health, laboratory, retail and health and wellness markets. Medicom was named one of Canada's Best Managed Companies for 2021 and was awarded the Mercure prize in the Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton Entrepreneurship - Large Company category at the 2021 Mercuriades.

Medicom has extensive experience in responding to the demand for personal protective equipment in the event of a pandemic. Medicom was founded in 1988 in response to the urgent need for medical gloves for healthcare professionals during the global HIV crisis. Since then, the company has been a reliable supplier of infection control solutions during multiple epidemics, including avian flu, SARS, H1N1 and Ebola, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today Medicom has 10 fully owned or fully controlled manufacturing facilities, as well as 17 sales offices on 4 continents selling into 95 countries. It employs roughly 2000 people, of which 340 employees are based in Canada. We are proud to say that 70 percent of Medicom's employees and 40 percent of our leadership team are from diverse backgrounds. Medicom sold over 2.4 billion masks and 5.5 billion gloves during 2020, largely through its Fortune 500 company customers and through strategic contracts with governments. Medicom became a key supplier of not only its homebased Canadian government, but that of the United Kingdom, France, Hong

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Kong, Taiwan and Singapore to name a few. Government's chose Medicom to be its PPE supply partner because of its high standards and high-quality materials.

Medicom distributes infection control products under the Medicom, Ritmed, Kolmi, Hopen, Ocean Pacific and Hedy brands. Medicom subsidiaries include Kolmi-Hopen in France, Medicom Asia in Hong Kong, United Medical Enterprise in the U.S.A., KHM Engineering in Singapore and Medicom HealthPro Limited in the U.K.

### Corporate Social Responsibility

Medicom's Corporate Social Responsibility is based on our core values and 3-pillar focus of community, environment and commerce. The Research and Innovation Platform at Medicom has established proactive approaches on incorporating environmentally conscious decisions within our standard product development, manufacturing processes and finished products through the integration of innovative processes and product research. As an infection control company of single use products in medical and dental settings the balance in understanding of clinical needs and environmental impact are key. Some of these products utilize polymers such as polypropylene, polyethylene, polyurethane, which add plastic to the environment.

Medicom where possible aims to reduce its environmental impact and currently has a variety of environmentally friendly products that:

- Are made from 100% recycled fiber;
- Use packaging made from at least 30% post-consumer content;
- Have components that are made in a near zero net carbon emission facility;
- Are produced with a materially reduced carbon footprint compared to competitors due to our geographically diverse manufacturing strategy;
- Are comprised of an over 90% renewable resource and chlorine free; and,
- Are made phthalate free.

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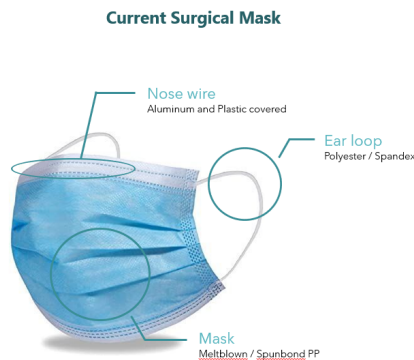
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Medicom aims to address environmental impacts and provide measurable improvements in waste management, reduction in carbon footprint and product end of life through further research and development. The initiated “life cycle” studies examine raw material sourcing up to the final stages of waste management in order to assess the greatest sustainability of products. This is being accomplished with focus on the 3Rs – replace, reduce and recycle.

## **Replace**

Example of initiative: single-use masks are made with nonwoven polypropylene that filters pathogens; however, the materials are primarily plastic-based. Most of these plastics in the industry are non-biodegradable and remain in landfills with extremely poor degradation profiles. Increased landfill and medical waste have become a critical concern during the pandemic due to environmental pollution. Typical surgical mask components are made from limited degradable products.



Sustainable solutions are key to reducing environmental impacts while addressing the demand for quality masks in the healthcare system and community at large. To that end, Medicom has invested in the development of sustainable initiatives and research partnerships that address the development of a biodegradable and/or compostable mask. Critical mask components being developed more sustainably, include: nosewire, earloop and tri-layer polypropylene materials.

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Through research collaborations with academic research institutes, industrial partners as well as in house research and development the following advancements have been achieved to date:

- Earloop: development of a degradable polymer to replace currently used elastomers (i.e. spandex)
  - o Current Status: prototypes of weaved earloops are undergoing degradation testing for profile and claim determination.
- Nosepiece: research into the development of a mechanically adaptive biopolymer composite that responds to external mechanical stimulus to impact the composite material and alter the bulk properties.
  - o Current status: Canadian academic research collaboration in progress.
- Polypropylene outer and inner layer replacement – investigation of use of polymer replacements of spunbond polypropylene.
  - o Current status: Biobased options available through sourcing partners and prototype testing in progress.
- Meltblown filter development through the use of blends of bioplastics and biomass-derived fibrous and particulate fillers are under investigation to yield final material degradation.

Several parallel investigations are also in progress:

- o Biobased filter recipe creation to achieve increased filtration efficiency.
  - Current status: prototype development in progress.
- o Utilization of innovative licensed coatings resulting in increased filtration efficiency.
  - Current status: prototype developed with improved filtration efficiency need to optimize for ASTM F2100 claim.
- o Investigation of cellulose based materials for filtration and degradation capabilities.
  - Current status: collaboration with current suppliers on bio-based nonwovens and investigation of innovative licensing agreements.



As part of our replacement program, we are planting 10,000 trees this year in Canada to compensate for the boxes of masks used at the Montreal plant.

### **Reduction**

Reduction activities are equally important in waste management efforts. Medicom has initiated efforts with manufacturing partners of key products to use more biomaterials and reduce carbon production footprint.

- Example: Single use air/water syringe tips used in dental practices where the product has been redesigned to yield a reduction of plastic usage by 61%.

### **Recycling**

Mask production yields waste of polypropylene. Medicom is investigating several options to reuse the waste.

Research includes:

- Feed back into the original nonwoven creation to establish a nonwoven product from manufacturing waste.
  - Current status:

Waste analysis outlined and feasibility in recycling in the formation of nonwoven rolls to be used back in construction manufacturing through a global partnership.
  - Addressing establishment of collaboration with recycling firms that recycle nonwoven materials to polypropylene pellets for vertical integration into nonwoven material production within the Medicom manufacturing capabilities.
- Increased use of end product recycled packaging alternatives.

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- Current status: partnering with packaging suppliers for use of recycled packaging material.

Medicom's logo is "pride in protection" and while it is paramount that it offers single use products to reduce infection transmission, it also is working hard through cutting edge research and collaborations to provide sustainable products to better protect our environment.

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