

United States Patent Office Accepts Zone Medical LLC's Request to Reexamine a Key Patent of I-Flow Corporation.

San Diego, CA, Feb. 18—Zone Medical, LLC, the worldwide distributor for the Solace® Post Operative Pain Relief System, reports that the United States Patent and Trademark Office decided to reexamine I-Flow Corporation's U.S. Patent No. 5,284,481, entitled *Compact Collapsible Infusion Apparatus*. (Reexamination Control No. 90/008,880) The Patent Office decided that six prior art patents raise a "substantial new question of patentability affecting claims 1 – 28 of United States Patent Number 5,284,481" on various grounds under U.S. Patent Law.

Apex Medical Technologies, Inc., the manufacturer of the Solace® Post Operative Pain Relief System, alerted the Patent Office to the multiple prior art problems regarding I-Flow's '481 patent. I-Flow Corporation has filed patent infringement suits (United States District Court, Southern District of California Case #'s 07CV1200 and 08CV0057) against Apex and Zone, alleging the Solace infusion pump infringes the '481 patent. Apex and Zone believe that the '481 patent is technology from over 20 years ago, while the Solace pump is a new design with key features that are not covered under the '481 patent. Also, nobody can infringe an invalid patent and the validity of the '481 patent is now clouded on multiple grounds in view of the Patent Office decision to reexamine the patent. Mark McGlothlin, founder and CEO of Zone and Apex, commented: "Our Solace product development was based upon years of research targeted at developing an affordable, latex-free infusion pump as an alternative to latex-containing pumps, which currently dominate the market. We believe that I-Flow's lawsuits may result in slowing awareness and access of patients and caregivers to our latex-free infusion pump, by forcing us to use our resources in costly litigation, at the expense of serving our customers. I-Flow's pumps use latex and we believe it may contact patients and caregivers. We believe that latex sensitivity among patients and among caregivers, should lead hospitals to consider alternatives to latex-containing infusion pumps. We see no merit in I-Flow's lawsuits. We believe the Solace pump cannot infringe the '481 patent, and that the '481 patent will not survive the reexamination and the additional challenges we have brought against the patent in court, including fraud on the Patent Office. We will vigorously defend our right to compete in this marketplace, and the granting of this request for reexamination is an important step. We believe that the latex-free design and excellent performance of the Solace system in the treatment of post-operative pain will continue to set a new standard for patient-friendly pain management."

The Solace Pain management System (www.solacepainrelief.com) was launched in July, 2007 and has been well-received by surgeons and patients in both inpatient and outpatient environments.

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