

Canadian Medical Devices

Canada is recognized as having one of the finest and most all-encompassing health care delivery systems in the world – a system operating with some of the best and most sophisticated medical tools in existence. Its relatively small population spread from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans and from the United States border to the high Arctic tundra, is served by a national medicare system that guarantees affordable health services to everyone.

Financed through several sources including health insurance premiums and general taxation, national medicare, which was fully implemented in Canada in 1961, rapidly became an organized health care delivery network to meet both large urban demands as well as those in more sparsely populated regions.

With the emergence of this health care umbrella to protect its citizens from the financially-devastating effects of uninsured serious health problems, use of the serv-

ices skyrocketed. No longer did patients have to shy away from physicians, clinics and hospitals for fear of receiving high bills.

This dramatic change led to the construction of large, fully-equipped hospitals and clinics, fitted with the latest in technology and operated by skilled personnel. In addition, major emphasis was placed on medical research, supported by governments in Canada, the USA and elsewhere, as well as by private industry and philanthropy.

Canada, which for a long time had imported most of its health care products and other medical devices, began a concentrated expansion of its own manufacturing industry.

Health and Welfare Canada, the federal government body responsible for administering and policing the Food and Drugs Act, has defined medical devices as any article, instrument, apparatus or contrivance, including any component, part or accessory thereof, manufactured, sold or represented for use in:

the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of a disease, disorder or abnormal physical state, or the symptoms thereof, in man or animal;

restoring, correcting or modifying a body function or the body structure of man or animal;

the diagnosis of pregnancy in humans or animals;

the care of humans or animals during pregnancy and at and after birth of the offspring, including care of the offspring.

Contraceptive devices are included but not drugs.

Today, more than 400 Canadian firms across the nation manufacture and supply more than 1 200 different medical products for both the domestic and export market. Their lines comprise a range of accessories, chemical agents, instruments and other items required for hospitals, doctors offices, clinics and other health care facilities. They include:

diagnostic instrumentation and "in vitro" laboratory testing products;

diagnostic, therapeutic and monitoring equipment and accessories;

implants such as pacemakers; prosthetic devices and sensory aids;

hospital, medical and surgical instruments;

equipment and accessories ranging from adhesive bandages to sutures, diagnostic and treatment radiation equipment and supplies;

surgical supplies;

sterile and disposable devices;

dental equipment, instruments and supplies.

A number of companies also produce aids for the handicapped, ranging from limb braces and joints to wheelchairs, stretchers and beds.



The Theraplan L, which is used for planning radiotherapy cancer treatment.