

Press release

Swiss start up to produce world's first transparent mask

Geneva, 9 June 2020 – Newly created Swiss start up, **HMCARE SA**, will be the exclusive producers of a fully transparent surgical mask, the first of its kind in the world.

HelloMask will help meet a critical healthcare need for better verbal and non-verbal communication in medical settings. It will reduce fear and stress caused by the anonymity of masked carers and build empathy and well-being through emotional connection. The mask ensures the wearer's face and expressions are completely visible, while providing breathability and protection from pathogens.

Although initially planned for use in clinical settings with children and the elderly particularly in mind, the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent health crises such as Ebola, have underlined the urgent need for a transparent mask like HelloMask for use in diverse settings and situations. In addition, HelloMask offers a lifeline to the deaf and hard of hearing dependent on lip-reading, comfort for those in the dentists' chair, and potential for wider use by the public.

Using innovative technology created by Switzerland's [Empa](#) and the [EssentialTech Centre](#) at the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), the single use HelloMask is designed as a Class 1 Medical Device compliant with the [European 14683 standard](#). It is also almost completely biodegradable.

"We've had significant interest in HelloMask already from people and institutions in different walks of life. Empathy and trust are proven to have a positive impact on a patient's well-being and recovery. A smile and a look can often speak more powerfully than words. HelloMask makes that possible," says HMCARE CEO, Dr Thierry Pelet.

"I would love to see such a mask, just to be able to see my parents' faces," says Jayson, a child cancer patient.

HMCARE, headquartered at Geneva's Campus Biotech Innovation Park, is co-founded by the four initiators of the HelloMask concept. Numbering three EPFL scientific experts in molecular virology and face masks, medical technology and devices, biology and life sciences, as well as a former children's storyteller, the founders bring together critical expertise and extensive experience.

The company has secured one million Swiss francs in seed funding from philanthropic foundations.

Funds will support the various necessary processes to get HelloMask into production and on the market by early 2021. This includes establishing industrial partners, developing the manufacturing process and product certification. HMCARE and the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) will partner on the clinical testing of prototypes.

HMCARE is currently exploring various possibilities for manufacturing HelloMask either internationally or locally through discussions with authorities and manufacturers. Production will primarily focus on meeting medical industry needs.

For audio-visual materials and further information, please go [here](#) and hmcare.ch

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