



U.S. Surgical Mask Manufacturers Join Forces to Create Secure Mask Supply Association and Raise Awareness of Domestic Supply Risk

Founded by 3 of the largest surgical mask and respirator manufacturers in the United States, the Secure Mask Supply Association (SMSA) was formed to highlight the risk of major supply shortages associated with increased foreign-sourcing dependency.

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October 15, 2014 – The Secure Mask Supply Association (SMSA), a collaboration between industry competitors Prestige Ameritech, Crosstex, and Gerson, has announced their formation and their goal of ensuring adequate U.S. mask and respirator supplies during global infectious disease threats through a viable American-based mask manufacturing industry.

Currently, the worldwide mask and respirator manufacturing and distribution business is largely conducted overseas, with 90% of masks being made in foreign countries. While the United States Government has expressed clear concern about the availability of America's foreign-controlled mask and respirator supply during global emergencies, it currently has no dedicated plans to address the issue.

“In times of major infectious disease threats, as we’ve seen with H1N1, mask and respirator shortages could turn our entire healthcare system on its head. We’ve come very close to that scenario in the past with the H1N1 threat and are certain to come up against it in the future.”, says Mike Bowen of Prestige Ameritech. “The question of whether or not the U.S. is prepared for future epidemics is definitely one of the most pressing issues today and as it stands, we are not prepared as long as this industry has most of its operations on other continents.”

The three founding companies of the Secure Mask Supply Association are entirely American-owned and maintain operations in the U.S.

“Individually, we have spent the past 7 years trying to address the concern brought to us by Federal officials. Together, through the SMSA, we hope to finally move the United States Government into action to better prepare for scenarios that directly threaten the lives and safety of healthcare workers, first responders, and the general public at large.”, says Bowen. “Surgical masks and respirators seem simple and abundant, but they are neither and we need to make strides to bring more of this essential industry back to the U.S. before we learn the hard way.”

For more information about the SMSA, visit <http://www.securemasksupply.org>.