

“We will ensure that India has access to the world’s best medical cold chain products”

11 October 2021 | Views

B Medical Systems, a Luxembourg-based player of vaccine cold chain and medical refrigeration manufacturer has recently announced its multimillion-euro India expansion plan that includes a new manufacturing factory in Gujarat and several partnerships, to provide world-class medically certified vaccine cold chain products to India that will help the country reinforce the critical cold chain needed to deliver COVID-19 vaccines. To find out more, BioSpectrum spoke to Jesal Doshi, Deputy CEO, B Medical Systems. Edited excerpts-



Where does India stand when it comes to vaccine wastage when compared to other countries?

The vaccine wastage rate varies by region. There are states with vaccine wastage while there are also states in India that are recording negative vaccine wastage like Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Gujarat, etc. There are guidelines provided by the Government of India to the states and Union Territories for the effective usage of the doses. Any reduction in wastage means inoculating more people as each dose saved is vaccinating one more person. The journey of the vaccine from the manufacturer until the time of administration moves through multiple stages and stakeholders and every step in the journey can contribute to vaccine wastage. Even though there are several challenges when it comes to the end-to-end vaccine supply chain, one of the biggest challenges is ensuring that vaccines are stored and transported at the intended temperature. Once vaccines get exposed to suboptimal temperature, they lose their efficacy. Once lost, the potency cannot be gained back making the vaccine doses ineffective. To avoid this, a reliable vaccine cold chain infrastructure should be put in place.

What role does B Medical Systems play in preventing vaccine wastage?

By providing a reliable vaccine cold chain with state-of-the-art real-time monitoring. We are the world leaders in the vaccine cold chain and have a legacy of more than 40 years. We are well renowned for our technical know-how of delivering a reliable medical cold chain. Irrespective of the external temperature and conditions, our products help store and transport the vaccine in its intended temperature range. Our 24/7 real-time monitoring offers one more layer of security for safe storage and transport. All of this helps ensure zero wastage during the storage and transport of vaccines.

Our products are WHO PQS certified and are certified medical devices. We have been working with several governments across the world to ensure a smooth and zero wastage COVID-19 vaccine rollout. For e.g: we have been supporting the entire COVID-19 vaccine cold chain for Luxembourg and have managed to achieve zero vaccine wastage. We are truly a one-stop-shop for any vaccine cold chain requirement and can help any institution requiring support with building or updating their cold chain infrastructure. India is a very important market for us. We were invited to 'Make in India' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the virtual bi-lateral summit between India and Luxembourg in November 2020. We have invested several million Euros in India and are committed to make India the cold chain capital of the world.

Our manufacturing facility will start production in a few weeks and we will ensure that the country has access to the world's best medical cold chain products. We believe that the Indian market is fast-growing, dynamic, and has a large need for a reliable medical cold chain.

B Medical Systems has recently signed a collaboration agreement with 1mg. How will this collaboration help in better vaccine delivery?

1mg has secured several thousand COVID-19 vaccine doses and has signed up with several corporates, residential societies, and local clinics for the nationwide vaccination campaigns. However, all these vaccine doses need specialized storage and, in some cases, they even need a storage temperature as low as -18 °C or below. This requires reliable cold chain infrastructure. B Medical Systems is supplying ultra-low freezers and transport boxes to 1mg for the storage and transport of COVID-19 vaccines. These are medical-grade products that have state-of-the-art features and deliver the highest level of reliability and safety to vaccine storage and transport, thereby avoiding any wastage.

B Medical Systems has partnered with Dr Reddy's for providing reliable cold chain solutions for the pan India rollout of Sputnik V vaccines. How is this initiative working?

Sputnik V, an adenovirus viral vector vaccine, needs specialised storage and is required to be kept at a temperature of -18 °C or below, necessitating the need for a very stringent vaccine cold chain. We are offering our vaccine freezers that offer storage temperatures as low as -25°C under this partnership. Our technology ensures that vaccines stored inside are not exposed to any temperature excursions and are maintained at their fullest efficacy. Our remote monitoring solutions ensure that there is end-to-end traceability of the storage conditions. Under this collaboration, our freezers have been placed across several major hospital chains in the country. We are proud to be supporting Dr Reddys in this effort.

What are your long-term plans for the Indian market?

Our vision is to save lives through reliable and innovative technology. On that front, we constantly strive to develop new products and services to serve the health care sector in the best possible way. We are in the process of developing several new products that will cater to the various nodes of the medical cold chain along with real-time traceability. We will also be launching several state-of-the-art products which are developed entirely in India and will be Made in India. Our India corporate office is located in Mumbai and our manufacturing plant is based out of Mundra. We have also established our distribution network and have made some strong partnerships in the country. We have set up a service network in 70+ cities across the country, which will help us install our products anywhere in the country without any delay. I am proud that we were able to deploy large numbers of our products across the country in the last quarter. It makes me very happy to see the trust that's put on us by some of the leading health care players in the country. We are receiving strong traction from the market and I am very confident that we will surpass our forecasts for the year.

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