

## **Reflection Process on achieving Good Health for all across the EU**

Dear Mr Byrne,

I am writing on behalf of the SBA in response to your letter dated the 14<sup>th</sup> July 2004, asking for comments on your Reflection Process.

SBA stands for Sterile Barrier Association and is a European trade organisation primarily for producers of sterile barrier packaging for medical devices and soft products, but also open to raw material suppliers (eg paper) and service providers (eg sterilisers). The sterile barriers we produce are used mostly to package single use medical devices prior to sterilisation, designed to maintain sterility until devices are opened at the point of use, thus ensuring the contents are free of bacteria when opened, thereby protecting the patient and user from bacterial infection. The barriers are also used to protect soft products such as dressings from bacterial contamination and reusable instruments which are sterilised after use.

The current European market demand for sterile barriers is around 350 million Euros, and our member companies sales satisfy some 70% of this European demand. Many member companies have over 30 years experience in producing sterile barriers, total sales of members runs to billions of Euros, most operate and trade globally, and all invest in ongoing research to develop ever safer barrier systems which afford the patient and user maximum protection from bacterial infection.

Our products, used properly will continue to reduce the risk of infection, which will lower the risk of deaths by infection, reduce the need for healthcare to deal with those suffering infection from contaminated instruments/soft goods, and also enhance the quality of life for all.

Below is a resume of our member's views on the benefits of robust systems and practices for infection control.

### **Infection control**

The continued need to reduce the cost of medical treatment and to provide both enhanced health and preventative care can be assisted significantly by achieving reduced infection rates in hospitals aiding rapid patient recovery and reduced post-operative costs.

To this end, the Sterile Barrier Association (SBA) work as a group promoting the use of materials and barrier systems which permit the aseptic presentation of medical devices, swabs, gowns and other items which, if contaminated, will cause infection.

The introduction of single use devices and their associated sterile barrier systems into hospitals the 1960s lead to a large reduction in infections and, at the same time, helped eliminate the costs associated with the storage, washing, inspection and re-sterilisation of reusable products.

The SBA is the largest group of single use sterile barrier system producers In Europe fully committed to the continuing development of sophisticated materials able to withstand the rigours of the variety of aggressive sterilisation techniques used within the industry whilst maintaining the sterility of the product up to the point of use.

The members of the SBA are also committed to minimising their impact on the environment both from the selection materials and the manufacturing techniques used to produce them. A high percentage of these materials are cellulose based thus coming from renewable resources and all can be incinerated for energy recovery using approved combustion techniques.

David Harding  
Director General of the SBA

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