McGowan Institute Medical Device Technology Receives Gold Medical Design Excellence Award

**ALung Technologies** is a Pittsburgh-based medical start-up company which is the leading provider of low-flow extracorporeal carbon dioxide removal (ECCO₂R) technologies for treating patients with acute respiratory failure. Founded in 1997 based on technology developed by McGowan Institute of Regenerative Medicine faculty members William Federspiel, PhD, W.K. Whiteford professor of bioengineering, chemical engineering, and critical care medicine, and the late Brack Hattler, MD, ALung has developed the Hemolung Respiratory Assist System (RAS) as a dialysis-like alternative or supplement to mechanical ventilation. ALung began commercial operations in 2001 with work focusing on the development of Dr. Hattler’s intravenous oxygenator known as the Hattler Catheter. Development of the Hemolung RAS began in 2005 and human clinical trials began in 2010. The device received CE-mark approval in 2013. (CE marking indicates the compliance with European Union (EU) legislation of a product.)

ALung announced recently that the Hemolung RAS won the Gold Award in the Critical-Care and Emergency Medicine Category of the 17th Annual Medical Design Excellence Awards (MDEA) competition. Winners were announced at a ceremony in conjunction with the Medical Design & Manufacturing (MD&M) East Conference in New York.

The Hemolung RAS provides Respiratory Dialysis®, a simple, minimally invasive form of extracorporeal carbon dioxide removal which serves as an alternative or supplement to mechanical ventilation for critically ill patients suffering from acute respiratory failure due to conditions like acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Unlike mechanical ventilation, the Hemolung RAS is minimally invasive and works by removing carbon dioxide and delivering oxygen directly to the blood, allowing the lungs to rest and heal. The device is currently approved for use in 29 countries across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific.

“The Hemolung RAS is a truly innovative medical device that provides a much needed alternative treatment option for patients who may require mechanical ventilation, an invasive procedure associated with significant side effects,” said Peter DeComo, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of ALung. “Receiving the Gold Award represents a culmination of more than 10 years of research and development behind the Hemolung RAS. It showcases the efforts of both our company’s academic founders who conceptualized this device, as well as our outstanding product development team that has made this technology a clinical reality.”
The Medical Design Excellence Awards (MDEA) is the medtech industry’s premier design competition committed to searching worldwide for the highest caliber finished medical devices, products, systems, or packaging available on the market. The awards program celebrates the achievements of the medical device manufacturers, their suppliers, and the many people behind the scenes -- engineers, scientists, designers, and clinicians -- who are responsible for the cutting-edge products that are saving lives, improving patient healthcare, and transforming medtech -- one innovation at a time. A total of 54 finalists in 11 medical product categories were nominated for the competition.

Illustration: ALung Technologies.

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