Dental hearing aid receives European CE Mark certification

by Yvonne Bachmann

SAN MATEO, CA, USA: A very unusual hearing aid, which is placed inside the mouth, is about to find its way into the European market. The device, called Soundbite, is manufactured by American medical device company Sonitus Medical. It is custom made to fit around either the upper left or right molars.

According to the manufacturer, the new hearing system is designed to allow sound to travel via the teeth, through the bones, to both cochleae, bypassing the middle and outer ear entirely. By using bone conduction via the teeth, Soundbite is intended to restore normal hearing to patients with single sided deafness, conductive or mixed hearing loss, all without surgery.

“It is not yet available in Europe. However, we have obtained CE approval to market the device in Europe. We are still determining the time frame,” Shirley Guerrero, Marketing Specialist at Sonitus Medical, told Dental Tribune ONLINE.

Nearly invisible when worn, the system consists of an easy to insert and remove In-The-Mouth hearing device and a small microphone unit worn behind the ear. No modifications to the teeth are required. The hearing device was reviewed in the April issue of the European Commission.

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The Finnish company Planmeca Oy, one of the world’s leading dental equipment manufacturers, announces its donation of a Planmeca Compact i dental unit along with a Planmeca ProMax 3D imaging unit to the temporary dental clinic that is being set up by the Japanese government and Japan Dental Association in the tsunami region.

“We found out that there are temporary dental clinics to be established in Tohoku region with the support of Japanese government. We would like to do our share in contributing to the rebuilding efforts of this tsunami-ridden region. With these dental devices modern, high-quality dental care become available for people in the crisis area,” says Mr. Heikki Kyöstilä, the president of Planmeca Oy.

The design of the Planmeca Compact i dental unit has been strongly steered by the importance of ergonomics and un compromised safety of the dental team as well as highest level of hygiene. There are over 25 000 Planmeca Compact i dental unit installations and users around the world.

Planmeca is the market leader in dental imaging devices – panoramic, intraoral and 3D imaging units – in the world. The Planmeca ProMax 3D’s digital imaging unit is designed to obtain complete information on patient anatomy in the minutest detail. The unit complies with a multitude of diagnostic requirements: those of endodontics, periodontics, orthodontics, implantology, dental and maxillofacial surgery, and TMJ analysis. Planmeca’s patented, computer-controlled SCARA (Selectively Compliant Articulated Robot Arm) technology allows a variety of imaging programs,” states Mr. Kyöstilä.

The announcement of this sizeable donation made in cooperation with Planmeca’s distributor in Japan, the GC Corporation, at the 18th International Congress of DentoMaxillofacial Radiology in Hiroshima 26–28 May, 2011. The temporary dental clinic is expected to be set up in Tohoku region in June.