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A Montreal Entrepreneur Wants to Help Fight Against Ebola



The Sani Sport and Sani Defenx machines kill pathogens in the air, on the walls, floors and ceilings in treatment rooms, including all the equipment in there.

Photo Patrick Sanfacon, La Presse

[Denis Arcand](#)

La Presse

To help stop Ebola and make a name for himself in the health sector epidemic, Montrealer Steve Silver tries to send free Sani Sport disinfection machines to West Africa.

He is not the only one. Many North American manufacturers of virus and superbug sterilizers wish to enhance their technologies by sending them to combat Ebola. Its charity, but it is also an exceptional showcase for the machines they offer to hospitals here to fight against antibiotic resistant pathogens such as *C. difficile* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. These nosocomial pathogens (hospital acquired) are a growing and expensive problem for healthcare systems worldwide.

"In the news, on TV, I saw women clean the nurse's boots by hand with brushes and liquid disinfectant," said Mr. Silver, speaking of the cleaning at a clinic in West Africa which cares for Ebola patients. "I was very surprised. I'm not a doctor, but it seemed risky." He offered two machines to Samaritan's Purse, an American Christian NGO that delivers medical supplies to Liberia. The agency immediately showed a lot of enthusiasm, but ended up saying no thank you, said Mr. Silver.

Reduce the risk of contagion

"These people [in West Africa] are in trouble. Our machines can't heal anyone, but they could at least minimize contagion in clinics," says Silver, President of Sani Sani Sport and Sani Defenx, a manufacturer of disinfection machines that use ozone and hydrogen peroxide. This combination is known for its ability to eliminate viruses and bacteria.

The sterilizer, Sani Sport VE (Virus Eliminator) and its competitors do not heal the sick; they kill pathogens in the air, on the walls, floors and ceilings in treatment rooms, and all the equipment in there. This reduces the risk of contagion.

The Ebola outbreak comes a year and a half after Mr. Silver began to undertake informal approaches in the hospital market. The company already sells the VE to professional sports teams like the Montreal Canadiens, who use it as bacteria prevention in the locker room. The same machines are sold under the brand Sani Defenx to the armed forces, police and prisons. There is no brand for the hospital market yet, but Sani Sport has a 15 year manufacturing history and the VE cost \$ 12,650, 10 times less expensive than competing machines.

By offering its machines, Mr. Silver said he wants to contribute to the fight against the epidemic, but it is no secret that he also hopes to attract the attention of the Ministry of Health of Quebec and other hospital administrators in North America. The VE machine does not need special approval from Health Canada, said Mr. Silver.

Sani Defenx clients include the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Anniston, Alabama. This is where the US government gathers the American volunteers who go fight the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Mr. Silver said he is ready to give the Government of Quebec a VE and sterilizer equipment: "I hope it does not happen to us, but if unfortunately we have cases here in our hospitals, disinfecting rooms and protective suits will be important."

THREE SIMILAR INITIATIVES

1- Medizone International, located in San Francisco, presented its AsepticSure prototype to Doctor's Without Borders. AsepticSure was invented at Queen's University in Ontario. Normally, Medizone requests "about \$ 125,000" for each of its disinfection machines, which use ozone and hydrogen peroxide, said the President of Medizone, Michael Shannon, Kingston, Ontario. Machinery for Africa would be free, he said. Medizone sold "some machines" in Ontario in 2013.

2- TRU 2-D SmartUVC, located in Memphis, gave two hospitals in Liberia two of its disinfection robots, \$ 110,000 US. The machines destroy viruses and bacteria by emitting ultraviolet rays. TRU-D robots are in use in 300 hospitals, including "three or four in Canada," said Chuck Dunn, president of TRU-D.

3- Xenex, located in San Antonio, Texas, also manufactures UV disinfecting robots used in 250 US hospitals. Xenex does not give away any of its robots valued at \$ 104,000 US, but offers a "discount" to charity organizations in Africa.