

For Immediate Release

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Medical Supplier Gets Shot In the Arm from NH MEP
Smiths Medical of Keene Reports Record Impacts after Solutions from Partnership

Keene, NH – Because of assistance from the public/private initiative New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NH MEP), Smiths Medical Keene has reported millions of dollars in production savings, tens of millions in retained sales, and more than 80 jobs preserved. These figures represent some of the highest overall impacts of any NH MEP client, and mean a major boost for the local economy.

“I am very pleased with the results,” said Smiths Medical Pain Management group leader Jeff Rondeau. “The employees have a better attitude. They work in smaller groups and both the quality and output are better. We are much more flexible now!”

Smiths Medical Keene partnered with NH MEP to look for efficiencies in their production facility as they introduced a new hypodermic needle product line. The company packages needles, tubing, medications, and other devices for medical procedures into one sealed, sterile kit. Company officials turned to NH MEP for assistance in redesigning the assembly line to reduce space and increase production.

Replacing the conveyor belt with a cellular layout that used a one piece continuous flow system, employees were able to create more procedure kits in less time. It also significantly reduced the footprint of the operation on the factory floor.

Due to the more efficient design, company officials estimate retained sales of \$36 million and the retention of 86 jobs. In order to achieve the same level of output, Smiths would have needed 100,000 more labor hours. Smiths Medical Keene says cost savings reached \$2 million.

“These are the highest overall impacts we’ve ever seen after partnering with a single client,” said Zenagui Brahim, NH MEP Director of Operations. “Smiths Medical Keene really embraced the concepts of Lean

training and Value Stream Mapping to improve workflow. They should be commended.”

"Along with the great results, I have noticed the subtleties," said Rick DiMeco, Smiths Medical Production Manager. "Absenteeism has dropped to nearly nothing. People are smiling, they like coming to work, and they like their environment. If they have any work-related concerns, they are empowered to change them. They 'own' the business and embrace it. If they have a better way of doing something, they bring it to the surface and know that it will be put into place. They do not fear change and are prepared for change at any time if it will show improvements."

With guidance from NH MEP, Smiths Medical Keene was able to reduce floor space for the operation by 62%. Meantime output per shift is up 82%.

About NH MEP

The NH MEP is an affiliate of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) under the U.S. Department of Commerce. The national MEP system is a network of manufacturing extension centers that provide business and technical assistance to smaller manufacturers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Through MEP, manufacturers have access to more than 2,000 manufacturing and business “coaches” whose job is to help firms make changes that lead to greater productivity, increased profits and enhanced global competitiveness. For more information, please visit www.nhmep.org, or phone 1-800-MEP-4MFG.

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