

Ford, GE Healthcare partner to produce ventilators

Ford Motor Company, in collaboration with GE Healthcare, announced it will begin producing in Michigan, USA, a third-party ventilator with the goal to produce 50,000 of the vitally needed units within 100 days and up to 30,000 a month thereafter as needed.



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Ford will provide its manufacturing capabilities to quickly scale production, and GE Healthcare will provide its clinical expertise and will license the current ventilator design from Airon Corp, a small, privately held company specialising in high-tech pneumatic life support products.

GE Healthcare brought the Airon Corp design to Ford's attention as part of the companies' efforts to scale production of ventilators quickly to help clinicians treat Covid-19 patients.

The GE/Airon Model A-E ventilator uses a design that operates on air pressure without the need for electricity, addressing the needs of most Covid-19 patients. Its production can be quickly scaled to help meet growing demand in the US.

"The Ford and GE Healthcare teams, working creatively and tirelessly, have found a way to produce this vitally needed ventilator quickly and in meaningful numbers," said Jim Hackett, president and CEO at Ford.

“By producing this ventilator in Michigan, in strong partnership with the UAW, we can help healthcare workers save lives, and that’s our No. 1 priority.”

Ford will initially send a team to work with Airon to boost production in Florida, and by the week of 20 April, will start production at Ford’s Rawsonville Components Plant in Ypsilanti, Michigan, quickly ramping up to reach full production to help meet surging demand.

Ford expects to produce 1,500 by the end of April, 12,000 by the end of May and 50,000 by 4 July – helping the US government meet its goal of producing 100,000 ventilators in 100 days.

“We applaud Ford for its efforts to lend its manufacturing capabilities to help quickly scale the Airon-licensed Model A-E ventilator and arm clinicians in the fight against Covid-19,” said Kieran Murphy, president and CEO of GE Healthcare. “Our deep understanding of the health care industry with Ford’s supply chain and production expertise will help meet the unprecedented demand for medical equipment. We continue to be encouraged by how quickly companies are coming together in innovative ways to address this collective challenge.”

GE Healthcare and Ford consulted with medical experts in determining the Airon-licensed Model A-E ventilator are well suited for Covid-19 patient care. The design is expected to meet the needs of most Covid-19 patients with respiratory failure or difficulty breathing.

The ventilator is designed for quick setup, making it easy for healthcare workers to use – and can be deployed in an emergency room setting, during special procedures or in an intensive care unit, wherever the patient may be located.

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