

# MYTHS vs. FACTS



## CORRECTING STOP ETO LAKE COUNTY'S INACCURATE CLAIMS & CONCLUSIONS

### MYTH

*Medline could use other sterilization methods other than ethylene oxide (EtO) but chooses not to.*

*Medline uses EtO because it is cheaper than alternative methods of sterilization.*

*Medline is dangerous to those who live in close proximity to its Waukegan plant.*

*EtO is a Class 1 carcinogen and mutagen, and should therefore not be used to sterilize medical devices.*

*Medline is emitting EtO thousands of times above the EPA's legal limit.*

### FACT

We only use ethylene oxide when alternatives like steam or hydrogen peroxide would damage or ineffectively sterilize certain medical supplies. EtO is the only FDA-approved method for sterilizing many critical medical devices.

Using EtO is a slow and expensive method of sterilization. Moreover, the emissions technology and labor costs are more expensive than other sterilization options. That is why EtO is our last choice – not our first.

Illinois is home to the toughest EtO regulations in the nation, and Medline's Waukegan controls are the most advanced in the world. Medline's low-level emissions comply with its state-issued permit and do not pose a health risk to nearby residents.

Our top priority has been and continues to be the health and safety of our employees and surrounding community. The use of EtO is regulated by the state to ensure that it is used safely and emitted at a safe level. Medline has always complied with all federal, state and local requirements. We're doing all we can to lead the industry in emission controls, which includes an investment in technology that captures more than 99 percent of all EtO that we use, preventing fugitive emissions and ensuring sterilized medical devices that leave Waukegan are immediately safe to use by healthcare professionals and patients.

EtO usage and sterilization is highly regulated by federal and state government agencies. Our current Illinois EPA permit allows Medline to emit no more than 150 pounds of EtO annually and to file regular reports with the agency to demonstrate compliance. Emissions data is made publicly available by the agency and shows that Medline is capturing more than 99 percent of all emissions. We are under our annual emissions cap.

# MYTHS vs. FACTS



CORRECTING STOP ETO LAKE COUNTY'S INCORRECT CLAIMS & CONCLUSIONS

## MYTH

*Medline's sterilized surgical kits are emitting EtO in its distribution centers throughout Lake County.*

*There should be mandatory fence line monitoring at Medline's Waukegan facility.*

## FACT

Sterilized kits in Waukegan are aerated for 48 hours in a heated room where any residual EtO is removed (or "off-gassed"). Medline's Waukegan facility also operates under negative pressure, which captures any residual EtO that is emitted as part of the off-gassing process. We perform residual risk testing so that our products meet FDA standards for EtO-sterilized products that come into contact with patients and medical providers. Once a product leaves aeration, it is immediately safe to use. Additionally, of the total items at an average Medline distribution facility, only approximately 1 percent are sterilized with EtO.

There has been more EtO air testing done in Lake County compared to any other community in the country. Under state law and Medline's permit, we regularly conduct ambient air testing near our facility. But the most important EtO measure isn't ambient air readings – it is what is coming out of our emissions stack, and our Waukegan stack emissions are continuously monitored and reported to the Illinois EPA.