

Foxconn works with Medtronic to make ventilators at its Wisconsin plant

Foxconn is partnering with medical device company Medtronic to produce ventilators at its controversial Wisconsin plant during the coronavirus outbreak, Medtronic boss Omar Ishrak told CNBC.

He noted that the factory expects to make the lifesaving devices -- based on its open-sourced PB-560 design -- in the next four to six weeks.

The Taiwan-based electronics maker, which is best known for assembling Apple's iPhone, confirmed the collaboration via email.

"The medical and technical experts from both our companies are working closely to fast track the research and development and production processes so additional ventilators can be quickly produced to fight the current global pandemic," a company spokesperson said.



Foxconn isn't the only company pivoting to ventilator production as the pandemic creates a shortage. Electric car company Tesla is making a component of a different Medtronic ventilator at its New York factory and prototyped a device that uses Model 3 parts, General Motors is working with ventilator company Ventec Life Systems to increase production in Indiana, and vacuum-maker Dyson has an order with the UK's National Health Service for 10,000 of its newly designed "CoVent" systems.

The new strain of coronavirus, which can develop into a respiratory illness known as COVID-19, was discovered in Wuhan, China, in December and has spread worldwide in the months since. As of Thursday morning, it had infected more than 1.4 million people and caused over 88,000 deaths globally.

Foxconn's factory at the Wisconsin Valley Science and Technology Park was meant to produce LCD screens when it opened in May, but Gov. Tony Evers last summer tempered expectations about the number of jobs it'd create. The Democrat inherited the deal from Republican predecessor Scott Walker, who helped woo Foxconn to Wisconsin with the largest incentive in state history.

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