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*For Immediate Release*

**Where are the Germs Hiding this Back to School Season?**

*Laboratory Studies Reveal the Hidden Health Risk of Unsterilized Wind Instruments*

**ANDOVER, Mass.**, August 24, 2006 – As students across the country head back to school, parents are focused on keeping them healthy – updating immunizations, packing hand sanitizer in the school lunch box, and encouraging frequent hand washing. But are there “hidden” germs that parents don’t know about?

While school music programs get underway, millions of flutes, trombones, trumpets, piccolos, saxophones and clarinets will be rented and loaned to students via schools or affiliated music dealers. These previously played instruments have the potential to pass germs between students. In fact, laboratory studies have confirmed that the bacteria responsible for staphylococcal and streptococcal infections, some of the leading causes of student absenteeism, can survive inside musical wind instruments.

Addressing this newly discovered health concern is Massachusetts-based Encore Etc., Inc. The company has developed the proprietary MaestroMD Sterilization System, the first-ever process for sterilizing wind instruments.

MaestroMD is a safe and effective system for eliminating 100 percent of the bacteria that can thrive in wind instruments, particularly strains that exist within the complex parts of a wind instrument.

MaestroMD was created by Dr. Lorenzo Lepore, a practicing dentist and musician, who has applied the same process for sterilizing medical and dental devices to the sterilization of musical instruments. “Parents have never considered that the rental instrument provided by their school could make their child sick,” said Lepore. “In fact, infectious microbes can actually live for extended periods of time in the dark, moist environments provided by wind instruments and their cases.”



MaestroMD is a process in which instruments are shipped to a regulated sterilization facility, where they are sterilized without ever leaving their cases. Safe and effective, MaestroMD utilizes the same technology that has been used for decades to sterilize medical and dental devices. Currently available to schools and music dealers, the service will be available direct to consumers later this fall.

“As an infectious disease specialist, I have been particularly attuned to what’s being done in the area of prevention,” asserts Dr. Ted Butler, Clinical Professor of Medicine at Tufts University of Medicine in Massachusetts. “Everything we’ve studied from a microbiology perspective confirms what we have always intuited. Personal items you put in your mouth simply should not be shared. There is little doubt that potential for cross contamination among players exists, and the responsible course of action, in knowing this, is clearly prevention,” he continued.

This fall, public schools in Medford, Massachusetts will be the first in the country to offer its students sterilized wind instruments. “We are proud to be the first school in the nation to take this step in ensuring the health and well-being of our students,” stated Michael McGlynn, Mayor of Medford. “Each school year, scores of Medford students receive rented wind instruments through their school music program, and we are committed to keeping these children – and their instruments – healthy.”

#### **About Encore Etc., Inc.**

Encore Etc., Inc. was established in 2001 by Dr. Lorenzo Lepore, a practicing Massachusetts dentist and accomplished musician. In the mid-1990s, Dr. Lepore learned that wind instruments loaned through school music programs were not routinely sterilized. Understanding the potential health risks to student musicians, he committed the next eight years to researching a solution. Today, MaestroMD is the first and only system for safely and effectively eliminating 100% of bacteria from wind instruments. For more information, visit [www.MaestroMD.com](http://www.MaestroMD.com).

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