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## **SHARED PENS HARBOR THOUSAND OF BACTERIA AND VIRUSES BUT A NEW TOOL SANITIZES BETWEEN USERS WITH A SWIPE**

*CleanBlock was developed by an Orlando Health employee concerned about patient well-being*

ORLANDO, Fla. - Families go to great lengths to avoid germs and illnesses, but shared pens are an often overlooked breeding ground for bacteria and viruses. Pens in places like doctor's offices, banks and schools are shared by dozens of people every day but are rarely cleaned. And about half of these pens are contaminated with germs that can make you sick. Now, a simple device developed at [Orlando Health](#) is helping to eliminate the health risks posed by shared pens by quickly and easily killing 99.9 percent of germs between users.

"Public places can store their shared pen in a CleanBlock where visitors can pull it out, use it and push it back in. It is designed to be a one-way system so there's no cross-contamination from one user to another," said Todd Roberts, inventor of the CleanBlock and a clinical coordinator at [Orlando Health UF Health Cancer Center](#). "The block is airtight and the sanitizer inside is more concentrated than standard hand sanitizer, yet it does not have a strong odor, irritate skin or damage pens. With each swipe, the pen is cleaned, dried and ready for the next person to use."

The idea was inspired by Roberts' patients at the cancer center, who often have fragile immune systems but were all signing into their appointments with a shared pen.

"Getting a cold isn't a big deal to most people, but for cancer patients it can be detrimental to their overall health," said Roberts. "I wanted to find a solution that would eliminate germs without requiring busy employees to take the time to put on gloves and wipe down pens after every use."

He brought the idea to The Foundry, a program that fosters the healthcare innovations of Orlando Health physicians and team members. The eight-week program refines each concept, explores market opportunities, identifies product development needs, and develops a plan for growth.

"We all observe patients and hospital operations from unique perspectives, and that spurs a lot of ideas that can really help people," said Roberts. "Orlando Health supports those ideas and helps to make them reality."

For parents like Erin Hoffman, it's one more tool to help her keep her family healthy throughout cold

and flu season.

“There’s a lot that we can do to eliminate germs at home. We are constantly washing our hands and wiping things down — even things like light switches, remote controls and cell phones. But it’s much harder to avoid germs in public, ” said Hoffman. “There are a lot of places we go where we pick up a pen when we walk in the door and I never really thought about how many people have touched those pens before me. So anything that can help keep those shared items clean is a great idea.”

Orlando Health plans to have a CleanBlock in every medical office on their campus by the end of the year and experts encourage anyone who offers pens to their visitors to do the same.

**B-ROLL, SOUND BITES, WEB ELEMENTS & HI-RES STILL PHOTOS** - Including HD video available for free/unrestricted use by the news media: <http://bit.ly/3bTNn3B>

*Courtesy: Orlando Health*

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#### **ABOUT ORLANDO HEALTH**

Orlando Health is a not-for-profit healthcare organization with \$5.6 billion of assets under management. The system spans nine Florida counties with nearly 450 locations that include 13 wholly-owned or affiliated hospitals and emergency departments; rehabilitation services, cancer centers, heart institutes, imaging and laboratory services, wound care centers, more than 300 physician offices for adults and pediatrics, and 11 urgent care centers in partnership with CareSpot Urgent Care. In FY18, Orlando Health served approximately 167,000 inpatients, more than 2.7 million outpatients, and more than 20,000 international patients. The organization is home to the area’s only Level One Trauma Centers for adults and pediatrics, and is a statutory teaching hospital system that offers both specialty and community hospitals. Nearly 3,600 physicians have privileges across the system, which is also one of the area’s largest employers with nearly 20,500 employees. Additionally, Orlando Health provides more than \$620 million in total value to the community in the form of charity care, community benefit programs and services, community building activities and more. Additional information can be found at [www.orlandohealth.com](http://www.orlandohealth.com).