

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A mask assembly for use in providing positive pressure respiratory therapy, comprising:

a mask seal; and

a mask shell;

wherein the mask assembly is configured to be fully positioned lower than a bridge of a nose of a face of a user and configured to provide an exposed bridge of the nose of the user, the mask seal being connected to the mask shell, the mask seal comprising a nasal region comprising at least one nasal opening, the mask seal comprising a first paddle on a first side of the nasal region and a second paddle on a second side of the nasal region, the first paddle configured to contact one side of the nose of the user and the second paddle configured to contact the other side of the nose of the user;

wherein the mask seal varies in thickness and wherein each of the paddles comprises a support in the form of a suspension member, which assists in maintaining a desired shape of the paddles, wherein the supports comprise a generally triangular shape with a base of the triangle positioned rearwardly of a tip of the triangle; and

wherein the suspension members extend from a user-contacting surface of the mask seal toward the mask shell.

2. The mask assembly of Claim 1, wherein the nasal region has the smallest thickness of the mask seal.

3. The mask assembly of either one of Claims 1 or 2, wherein the supports of the paddles have the largest thickness of the mask seal.

4. The mask assembly of any one of Claims 1-3, wherein the suspension members are connected to one another to form a connected area of increased thickness.

5. The mask assembly of any one of Claims 1-4, wherein the mask seal further comprises an oral opening, wherein a region surrounding the oral opening has the smallest thickness or equals the smallest thickness of the mask seal, preferably wherein the mask seal further comprises outer peripheral portions on either side of the oral opening, wherein each of the outer peripheral portions wrap from a rear-facing side of the mask seal around to at least a portion of a laterally-facing side of the mask seal, wherein the outer peripheral portions have a thickness that is greater than the thickness of the nasal region.

6. An interface assembly comprising the mask assembly of any one of Claims 1-5, wherein the interface assembly further comprises a removably attachable frame, wherein the frame comprises one or more covers that extend from the frame and are configured to prevent the mask seal from expanding outwardly and losing shape when pressurized air is introduced into the mask seal.

7. The interface assembly of Claim 6, wherein each of the suspension members is aligned with a respective one of the covers and is configured to transfer load from the seal to the covers via the suspension member.

8. An interface assembly comprising the mask assembly of any one of Claims 1 to 5, wherein the interface assembly further comprises a removably attachable frame, wherein the frame comprises a pair of covers supported relative to the mask assembly such that each of the covers is positioned adjacent a portion of a respective one of the first and second paddles, wherein the covers limit expansion of at least the portion of the first and second paddles.

9. The interface of Claim 8, wherein the covers are unitarily formed with the frame.

10. The interface of Claims 8 or 9, wherein the covers are positioned adjacent only a portion of the paddles leaving a portion of the paddles exposed.

11. The interface of any one of Claims 8 to 10, wherein the suspension members comprise elongate, thickened areas of the mask seal extending toward the frame from a patient side of the mask assembly.

12. The interface of any one of Claims 8 to 11, wherein the suspension members are thicker than other portions of the mask seal in the paddles and the nasal region.

13. The interface of any one of Claims 8 to 12, wherein each of the suspension members is aligned with a respective one of the covers and is configured to transfer load from the seal to the covers via the suspension member.