Claims

1. An apparatus for providing respiratory assistance to a user via a user conduit, the apparatus being operable in a humidifying mode in which a humidification chamber can be located in an operating position on the apparatus and a non-humidifying mode, wherein the apparatus includes:

a blower for generating a gas stream;

a housing having a housing outlet port that is in communication with the blower and

a heating assembly that is moveable relative to the housing, and in the humidifying mode, the heating assembly can be located in an operating position in which a humidification chamber can be engaged by the heating assembly, and in the non- humidifying mode the heating assembly can be located in a stowed position in which the humidification chamber is unable to be loaded on the heating assembly.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the housing has a housing inlet port that can communicate with the user conduit.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the apparatus includes the humidification chamber for containing an amount of water, the humidification chamber having a chamber inlet that communicates with the housing outlet port and the chamber outlet that communicates with the housing inlet port to convey the gas stream through the humidification chamber.

4. The apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the heater assembly receives power for heating the water in the humidification chamber to increase humidification of the gas stream.

5. The apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the heater assembly engages the humidification chamber to heat the water, in which the engagement between the powered device and the humidification chamber can be any one or a combination of thermal engagement, electrical power engagement, and/or an inductive power engagement.

6. The apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the housing includes a main body and a platform that is moveable relative to the main body.

7. The apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the platform is pivotally connected to the housing.

8. The apparatus according to claim 6 or 7, wherein the heater assembly is arranged on an outer face of the main body to facilitate thermal engagement between the heater assembly and the humidification chamber when the humidification chamber is in the operating position.

9. The apparatus according to any one of claims 6 to 8, wherein the heater assembly is arranged to face outwardly from an external wall of the main body.

10. The apparatus according to any one of claims 6 to 9, wherein the heater assembly is arranged on the platform and the heater assembly engages the humidification chamber engage when the humidification chamber is in the operating position.

11. The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the heater assembly is arranged on an inner portion of the platform and the humidification chamber can be seated on the heater assembly which engages the heater assembly and the humidification chamber.

12. The apparatus according to any one of claims 6 to 11, wherein the platform can be pivoted into a closed orientation in which the act of closing the platform moves the auxiliary flow path to an active position, and the platform can be pivoted into an opened orientation in which the act of opening the platform moves the auxiliary flow path to the inactive position.

13. The apparatus according to claim 12, wherein when the platform is in the opened orientation, the humidification chamber may be loaded onto the platform, and the heater assembly engages the humidification chamber for heating water in the humidification chamber.

14. The apparatus according to any one of claims 1 to 13, wherein the apparatus includes an auxiliary flow path that is operably connected to the housing so as to move between:

i) an active position in which the auxiliary flow path communicates with the housing outlet port and the housing inlet port to convey the gas stream therebetween when the apparatus is in the non-humidifying mode, and

ii) an inactive position in which the auxiliary flow path is remote from the housing outlet port and the housing inlet port so the humidification chamber can be located in the operating position when the apparatus is in the humidifying mode.

15. The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the auxiliary flow path is arranged on the platform and is in the active position when the platform is closed against the main body, and is in the inactive position when the platform is pivoted away from the main body.