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Fielmann defines Hygiene Standards for Optical and Hearing Aid Retail

Hamburg (ots) -

Scientific study by Prof. Dr. Martin Exner shows how to safeguard health in retail environment

As a responsible family business, Fielmann acted early and decidedly, as the coronavirus spread across Europe. Already in February 2020, we implemented a series of hygiene and infection prevention measures in order to protect the health of our customers and employees. Since 20 March 2020, we have discontinued our regular business and restricted our store operations to an emergency service. This way, we actively contribute to a slowdown of the coronavirus pandemic.

By maintaining an emergency service in our optical stores and our hearing aid studios, we continue to provide basic health care under a strict hygiene regime. This way, Fielmann supports essential professions in their life-saving work. Additionally, our emergency service caters to those people who are dependent on eyecare and hearing aid services in their daily lives. Whereas a few countries have closed down optical and hearing aid retail completely, Fielmann currently operates the emergency service in more than 90 percent of its stores across Europe.

Fielmann seeks to maintain this essential emergency service in all markets contingent on the regulatory framework, yet we must also safeguard the health of our customers and employees. With these goals in mind, Fielmann commissioned a scientific investigation by one of Germany's foremost experts on hygiene and infection prevention: Prof. Dr. med. Dr. h.c. Martin Exner (Director of the Institute of Hygiene and Public Health as well as Managing Director of Infectiology and Infection Protection at the University Hospital Bonn). Prof. Dr. Exner has identified the biggest risks in optical and hearing aid retail as well as appropriate measures to counter them. The study is now available, its key results have been summarised in an infographic.

Prof. Dr. Exner: "When it comes to SARS-CoV-19, the biggest risk is an infection via droplets that reach you while you stand close to someone (less than 1,5m) speaking, coughing or sneezing. The presented hygiene standards list comprehensive measures to counter the infection risks such as employee training, wearing appropriate protective gear and regular disinfection with appropriate sanitisers. In summary, it can be said that if optical and hearing aid professionals were to rigorously implement these standards, then a safe emergency service can be carried out."

Marc Fielmann, CEO of the Fielmann Group: "Based on Prof. Dr. Exner's outstanding work, Fielmann has implemented various measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in its stores. For example, we are training all employees to ensure a strict compliance with our hygiene measures. We also equip our healthcare professionals with protective gear for eyes, noses, mouths and hands. And of course, we use appropriate sanitisers to disinfect products, equipment and store fixtures. This way, we are confident that we can protect the health of both our customers and our employees while maintaining a safe emergency service for all those people that depend on their glasses and hearing aids under these difficult circumstances."

Together with Prof. Dr. Exner, the University Hospital Bonn and other scientific organisations, such as the German Association of Hospital Hygiene, Fielmann will continue to further develop its standards. Marc Fielmann: "As a responsible family business, we will share our standards as well as our practical experience with other businesses. Thus, we hope to contribute to proven measures countering the coronavirus pandemic while businesses maintain operations to ensure a basic supply of critical goods."

In the next week, the scientific task force will partner with the German Retail Federation (HDE) to develop potential guidelines for all German retail. Fielmann will roll out its hygiene standards across Europe and adjust it to national and regional regulation where necessary.

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