

## MNHI Begins Launch of OdonAssist™ In Europe, Ushering in a New Era of Assisted Vaginal Birth

**Parsippany, NJ – [September 30, 2025]** – Maternal Newborn Health Innovations (MNHI), a Public Benefit Corporation focused on improving maternal and newborn health outcomes globally, has announced that **OdonAssist™, an entirely new innovation to assist the birth of newborns in circumstances of prolonged, difficult second stage labour during childbirth, has been launched in Europe.**

OdonAssist™ is a soft, inflatable, single-use medical device designed to assist with vaginal births when complications arise during the second stage of labour. MNHI received CE certification for OdonAssist in April 2025 and is presently implementing a phased rollout in 26 leading maternity hospitals across France, Italy, and the UK.

The launch of OdonAssist™ marks the **first true breakthrough innovation in assisted vaginal birth in more than a century<sup>1</sup>**—designed to address an important unmet need identified by women and healthcare professionals for a gentler alternative to other assisted vaginal birth devices.<sup>2</sup>

**Gary Cohen, CEO of MNHI**, and former UN Commissioner on Life Saving Commodities for Women and Children said:

*“The launch of OdonAssist™ marks only the fourth time in human history, and the first time since the 1800’s, that an entirely new method to assist the birth of newborns has been introduced. Our innovation enables obstetricians to assist childbirth gently, in a manner designed to be safe for mother and newborn. It is an important milestone for MNHI that reflects the unwavering commitment of our team, clinical champions and investors, who helped turn a vision into reality.”*

MNHI is working closely with leading obstetricians on the phased rollout of OdonAssist™, including training programs co-developed for use with maternity teams. Obstetricians were closely engaged throughout the development of OdonAssist, making this a truly clinically driven innovation.

**Dr. Mario Meriardi, Chief Medical Officer at MNHI** and former Coordinator of Maternal and Perinatal Health at the World Health Organization said:

*“The launch of OdonAssist is the culmination of nearly two decades of collaboration, vision, and relentless commitment to maternal health. I still remember the first time I met the inventor Jorge Odón in 2006 and saw his idea. Even then, we knew it had the potential to transform assisted birth of newborns.”*

## Why It Matters

Globally, an estimated 140 million births take place every year.<sup>3</sup> Prolonged or complicated labour occurs in approximately 10-15% of these births.<sup>4</sup> In 2023, 2.3 million newborns died, comprising 47% of all under age-five child mortality,<sup>5</sup> and 1.9 million stillbirths occurred.<sup>6</sup> Approximately 260,000 women die each year from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth,<sup>7</sup> and ten million more suffer from severe complications.<sup>8</sup> Complications during childbirth are associated with 24% of all neonatal deaths<sup>9</sup> and 46% of stillbirths.<sup>10</sup>

The burden of maternal and newborn mortality is highest in low and low-middle income countries,<sup>7</sup> though childbirth-related deaths and complications impact mothers and their newborns in all countries. In some higher income countries including the United States and United Kingdom, women of colour face considerably higher risk of dying in childbirth than white women.<sup>11,12</sup>

1. Blackstone F, Katukuri V. Will vacuum delivery go the way of vaginal breech delivery? *Contemp Ob Gyn*. 2019 Jul 10; Vol 64 No 07.

2. Hotton et al. Women's experiences of the Odon Device to assist vaginal birth and participation in intrapartum research: a qualitative study in a maternity unit in the Southwest of England. *BMJ Open*. 2021;11:e057023.

3. WHO. Maternal Health. [https://www.who.int/health-topics/maternal-health#tab=tab\\_2](https://www.who.int/health-topics/maternal-health#tab=tab_2). Accessed 30 Jul 2025.

4. Maaløe N, Kujabi ML, Nathan NO, Skovdal M, Dmello BS, Wray S, van den Akker T, Housseine N. Inconsistent definitions of labour progress and over-medicalisation cause unnecessary harm during birth. *BMJ*. 2023 Dec 6;383:e076515. doi: 10.1136/bmj-2023-076515. PMID: 38084433; PMCID: PMC10726361.

5. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/neonatal-mortality>

6. <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-survival/stillbirths>

7. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/maternal-mortality>

8. UNICEF. *The State of the World's Children 2009: Maternal and newborn health*. New York: UNICEF; 2009.

9. UNIG for CME. *Levels & trends in child mortality: report 2019, estimates developed by the United Nations inter-agency group for child mortality estimation [online]*, 2019.

Available: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/levels-and-trends-in-child-mortality-2019> Accessed 25 Apr 2023.

10. UNIG for CME. *Standing Up for Stillbirth: Current estimates and key interventions, United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 2025* <https://childmortality.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/UNIGME-Stillbirth-Report-2024.pdf> Accessed 11 Apr 2025.

11. <https://www.aha.org/news/news/2022-02-23-cdc-us-maternal-mortality-rate-rose-2020-women-color>

12. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/nov/11/black-women-uk-maternal-mortality-rates>

## About MNHI

Maternal Newborn Health Innovations (MNHI) is a Public Benefit Corporation dedicated to improving maternal and newborn outcomes through bold innovation. MNHI's first product, **OdonAssist™**, addresses a critical gap in assisted vaginal birth. Designed to be gentle, effective, and accessible, the patented device is intended to improve birth outcomes across a range of clinical settings, from high-resource hospitals to lower-resource environments around the world. With a commitment to evidence-based development and equitable access, MNHI exists to serve mothers, babies, and health systems worldwide.

MNHI's progress has been bolstered by **strategic investment from AXA IM Alts**, whose Global Health Private Equity Strategy focuses on delivering affordable, high-impact healthcare innovations to underserved markets.

Learn more at: [www.mnhi.com](http://www.mnhi.com)

## Media Contact

Rochelle Fuhrmann, Chief Financial Officer, MNHI

[support@mhni.com](mailto:support@mhni.com)

## About AXA IM Alts

**AXA IM Alts** is a business unit of AXA Investment Managers, part of the **BNP Paribas Group** since **1st July 2025** following the closing of its acquisition.

AXA IM Alts is a **global leader in alternative investments** with over €188 billion of assets under management comprising over €80 billion of primarily **private real estate**, €96 billion of **private debt and alternative credit**, as well as over €12 billion in **Infrastructure** and **private equity**.

We take a 360° approach to real estate & infrastructure investing with over €126 billion of assets under management in **direct opportunities, held indirectly through debt and listed equities** and via **long term private equity investments** into operating platforms. ESG is fully integrated into our investment decision making processes with a particular focus on decarbonization.

AXA IM Alts employs over 990 people located in 17 offices around the world and serves the needs of over 600 clients from Europe, North America, Asia Pacific and Middle East. We are the **number one property portfolio and asset manager in Europe**,



**and one of the largest worldwide.**

*All figures at end-June 2025*

*Highest-ranked Real Estate Manager in the European Union according to IPE's Global Top 150 Real Estate Investment Managers, based on total value of real estate assets under management, November/December 2024*

Copyright 2025. OdonAssist is a trademark of Maternal Newborn Health Innovations, PBC. MKT-42-EN, Ver.2.0.