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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A closed system, spikeless, positive-flow valve device includes a body defining an internal cavity. At the proximal end of the body is an opening which is preferably sufficiently large to receive an ANSI standard tip of a medical implement. The valve includes a plastic, resilient silicon seal which fills the upper cavity and opening with an oval seal cap having a slit. The opening presses the oval seal cap to keep the slit closed in the decompressed state. The slit opens as the nose of the medical implement compresses the seal into the cavity and the seal cap is free from the opening. The housing also includes a fluid space which facilitates fluid flow between the medical implement and a catheter tip. The fluid space within the valve automatically and reversibly increases upon insertion of the medical implement into the cavity and decreases upon withdrawal of the medical implement, such that a positive flow from the valve toward the catheter tip is effected upon withdrawal of the medical implement, thereby preventing a flow of blood from a patient into the catheter when the medical implement is removed from the valve.

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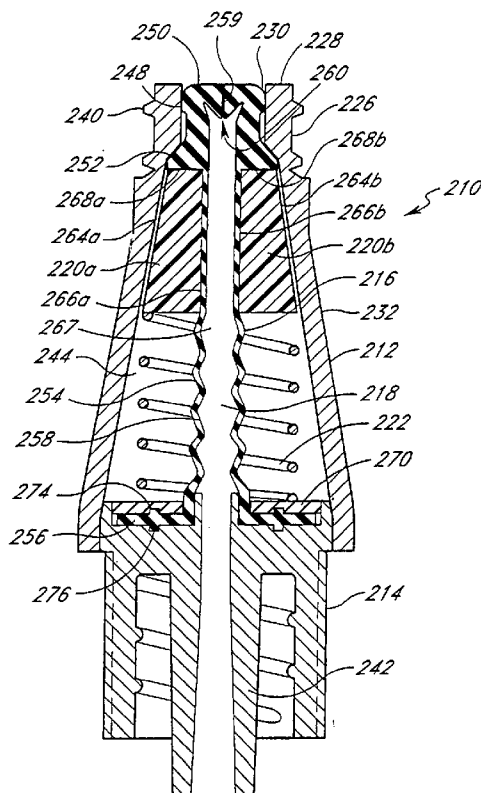
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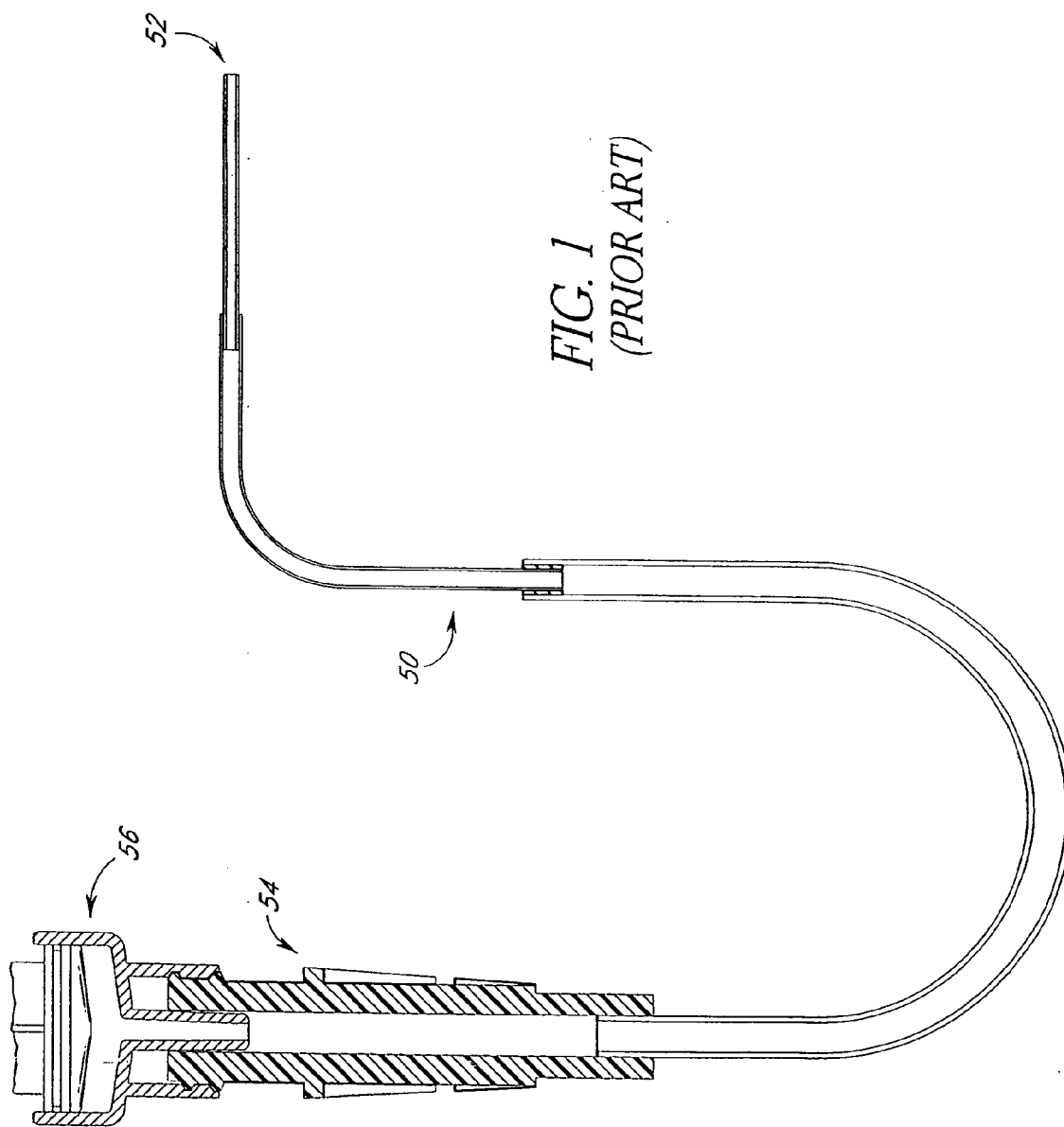
(21) Appl. No.: **11/417,773**

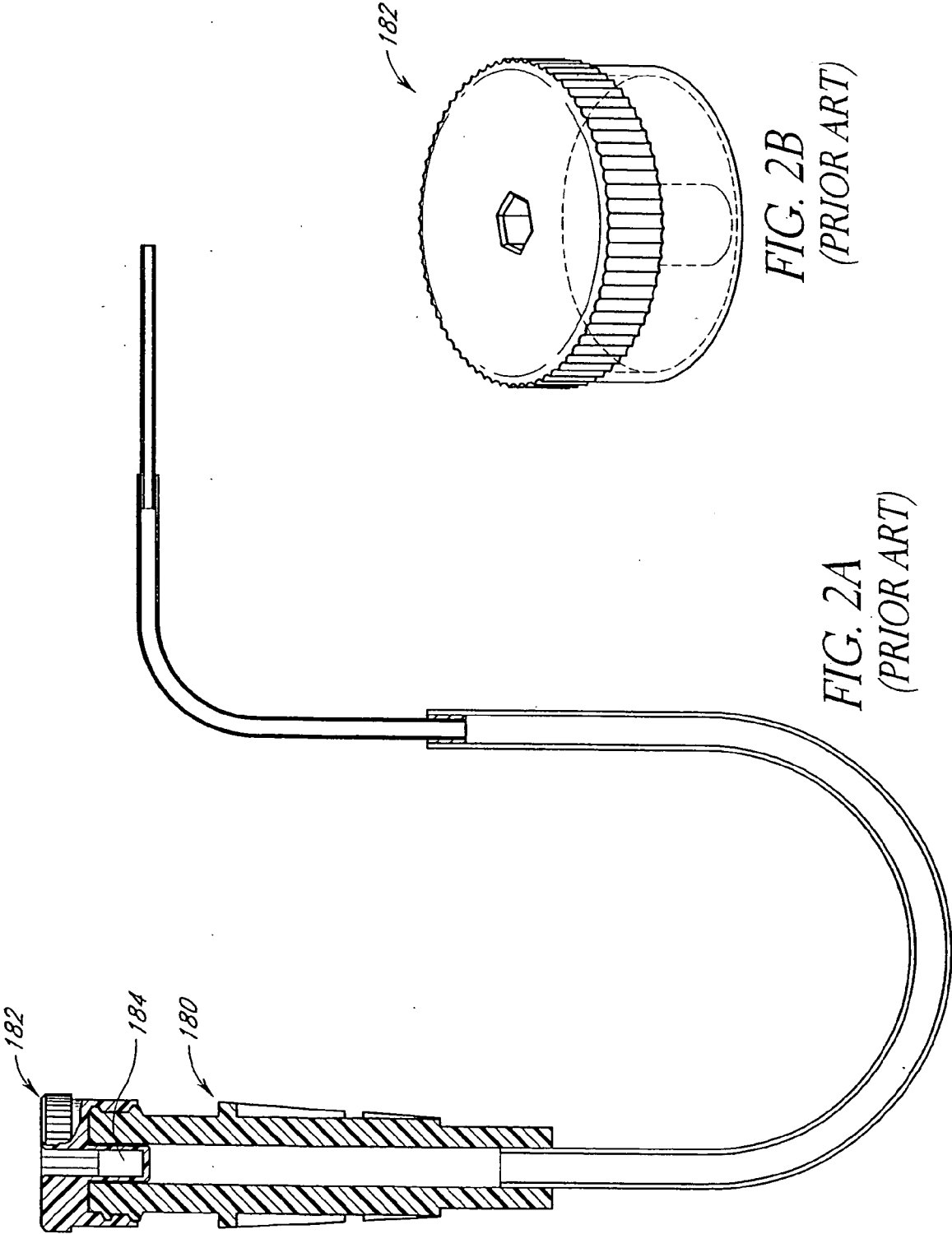
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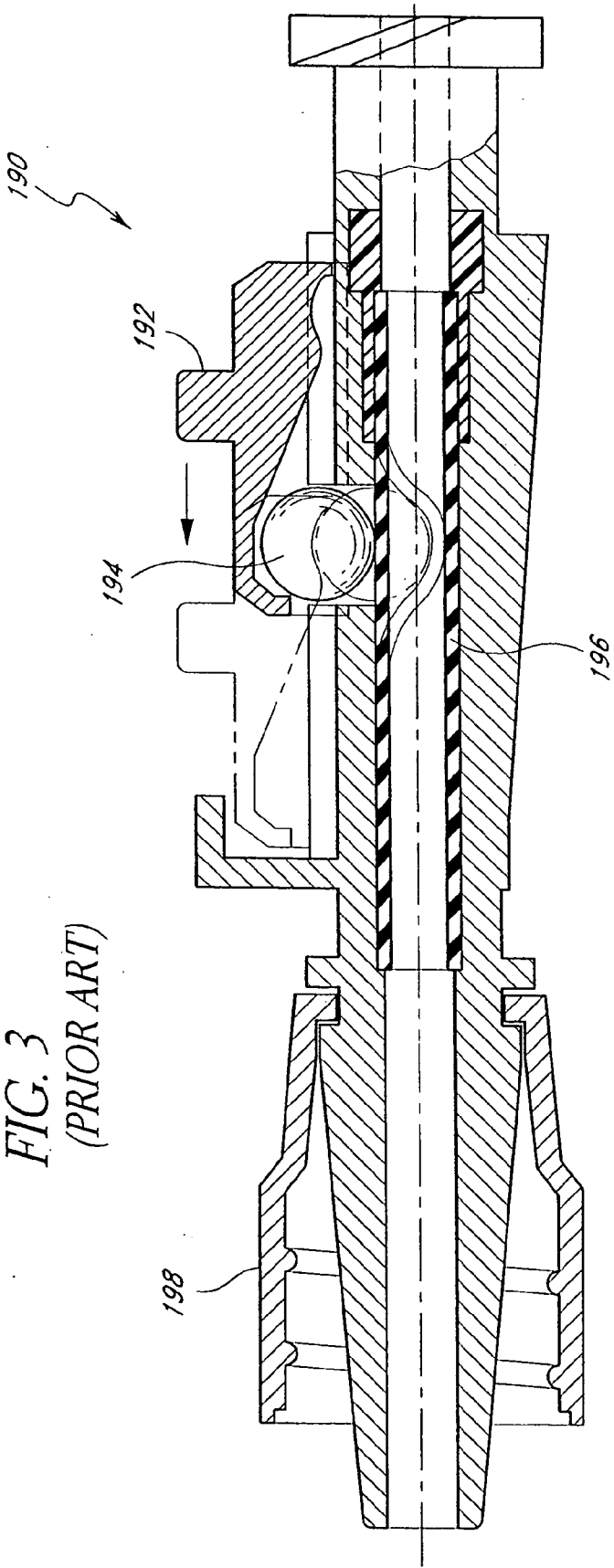
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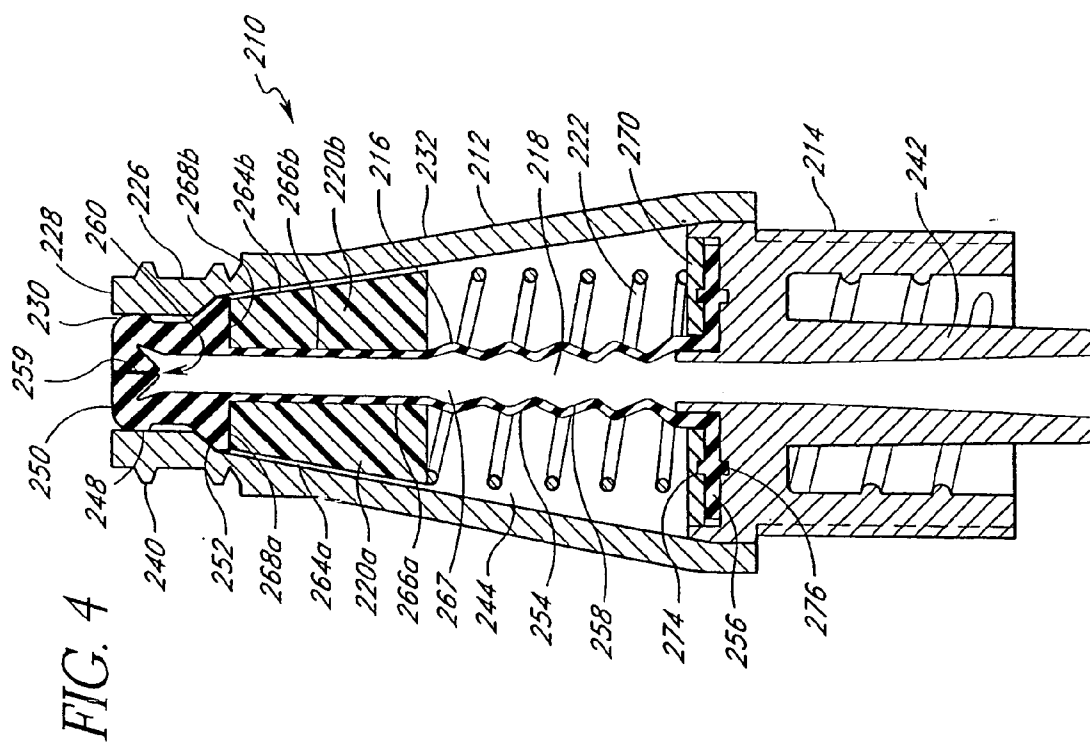
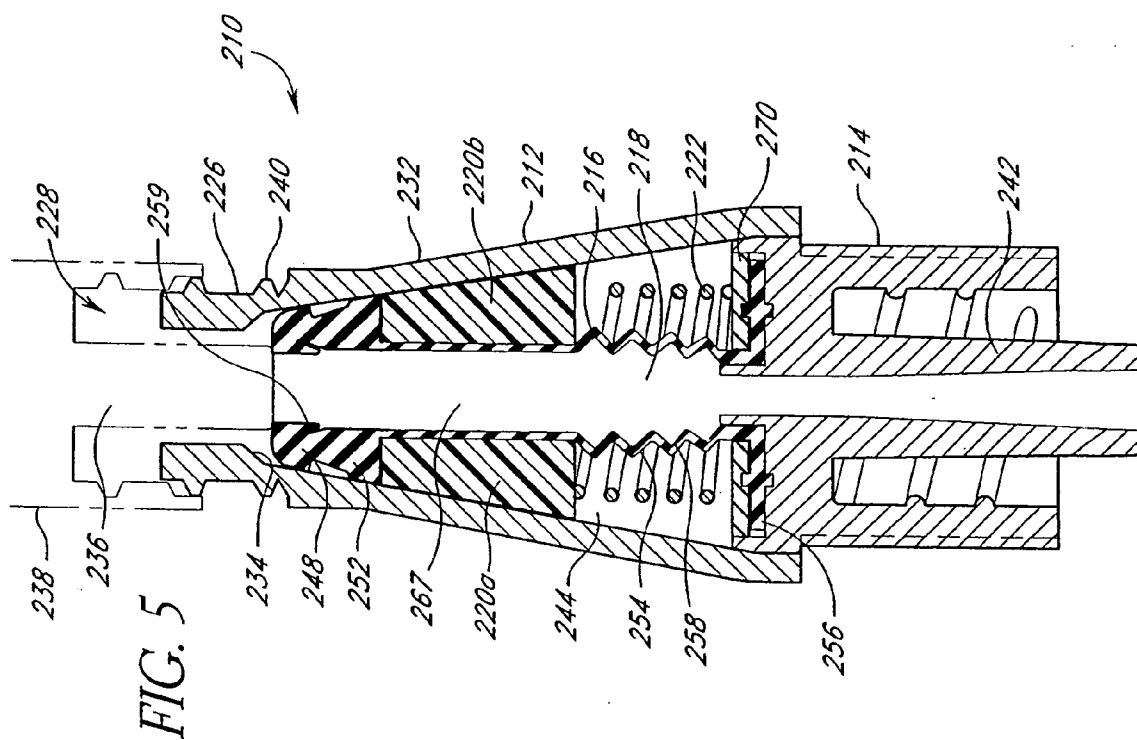
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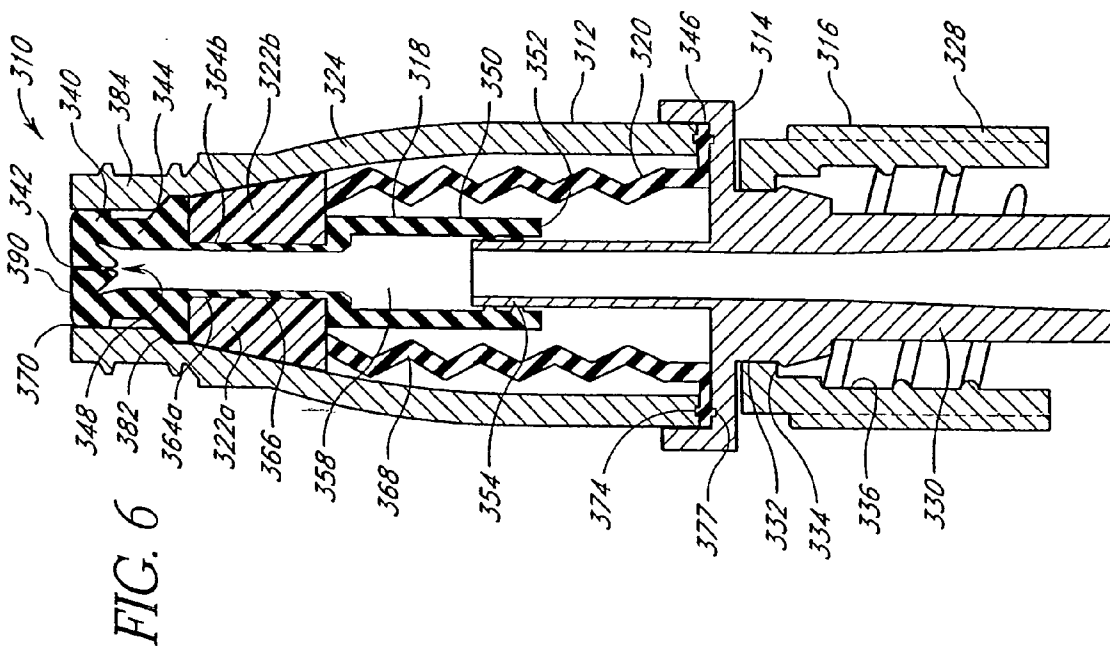
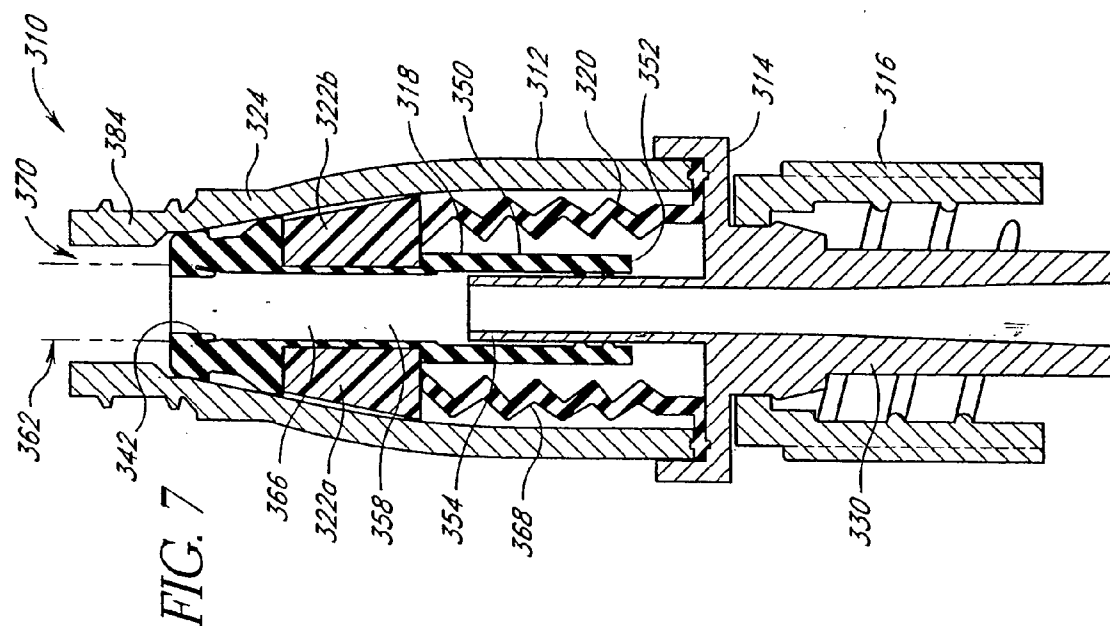


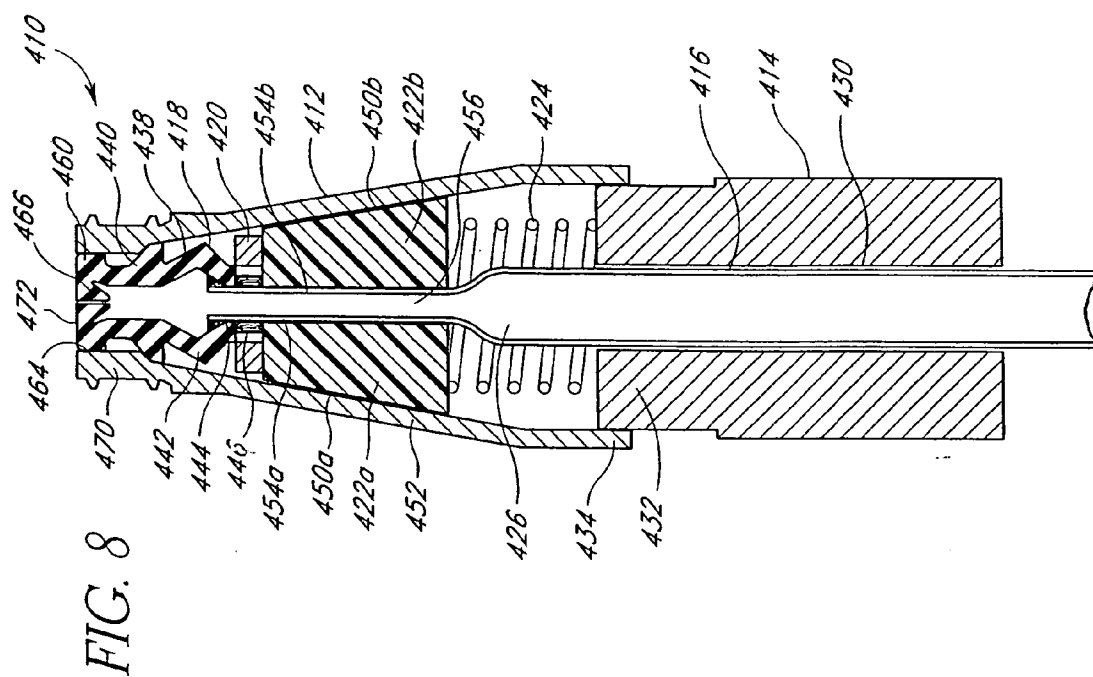
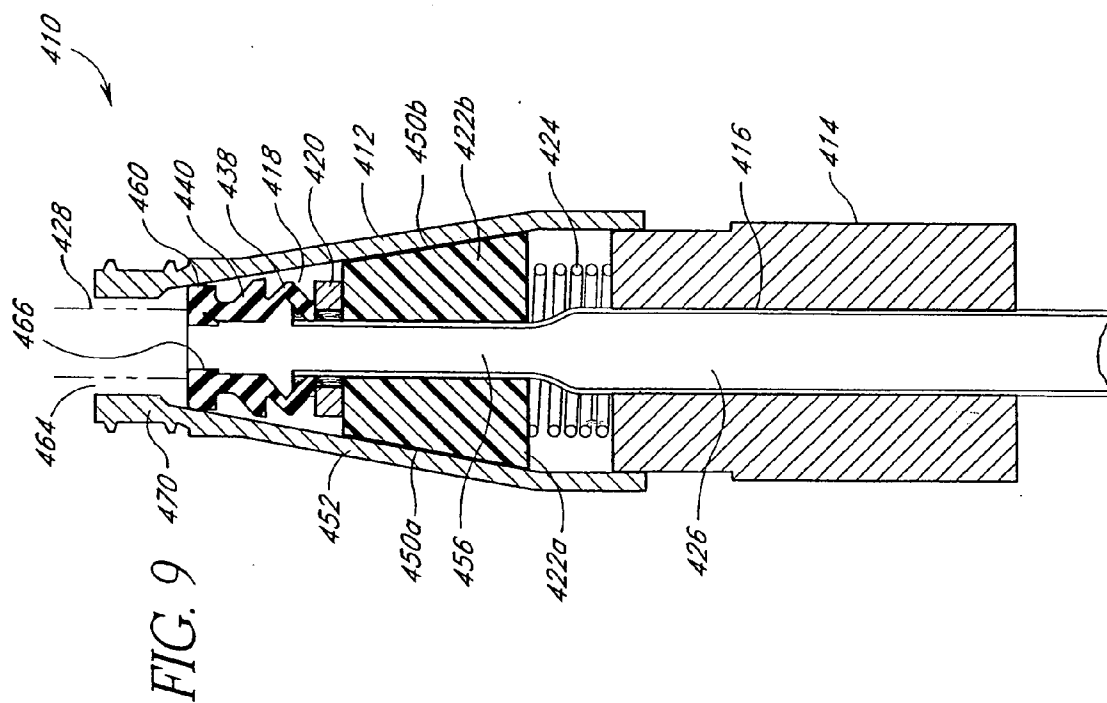


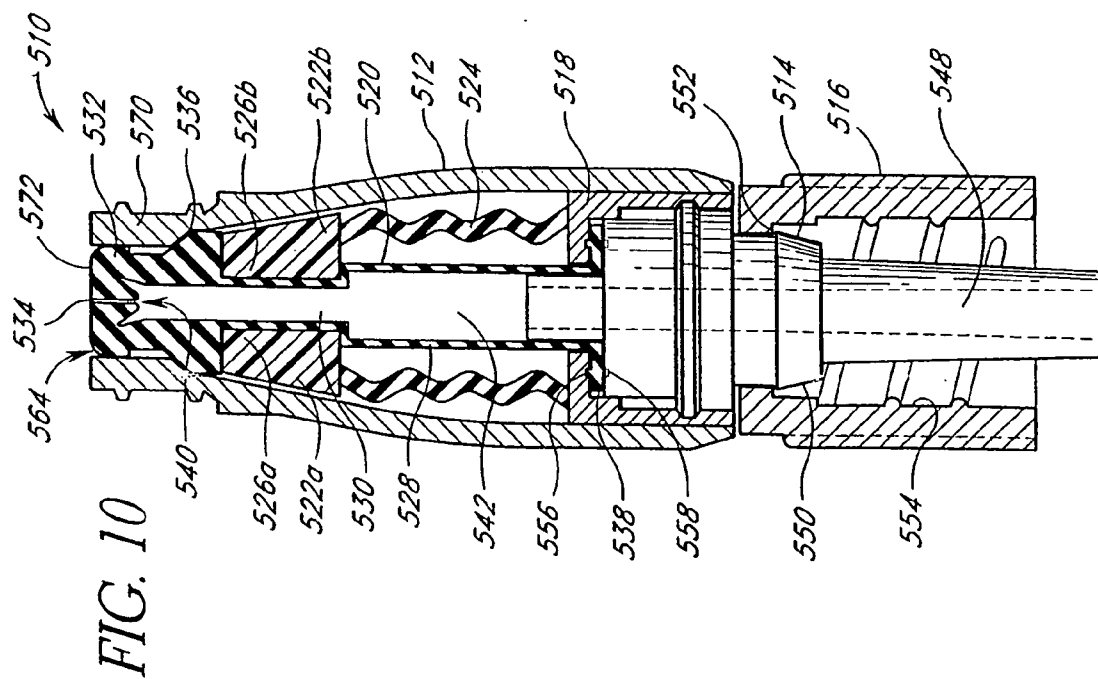
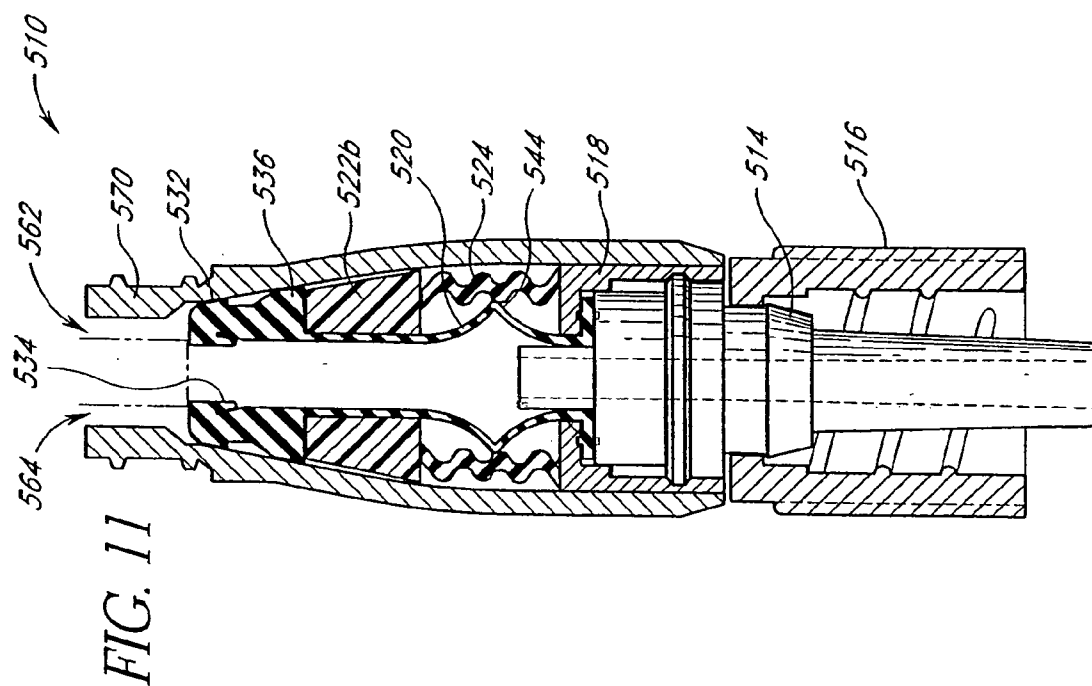


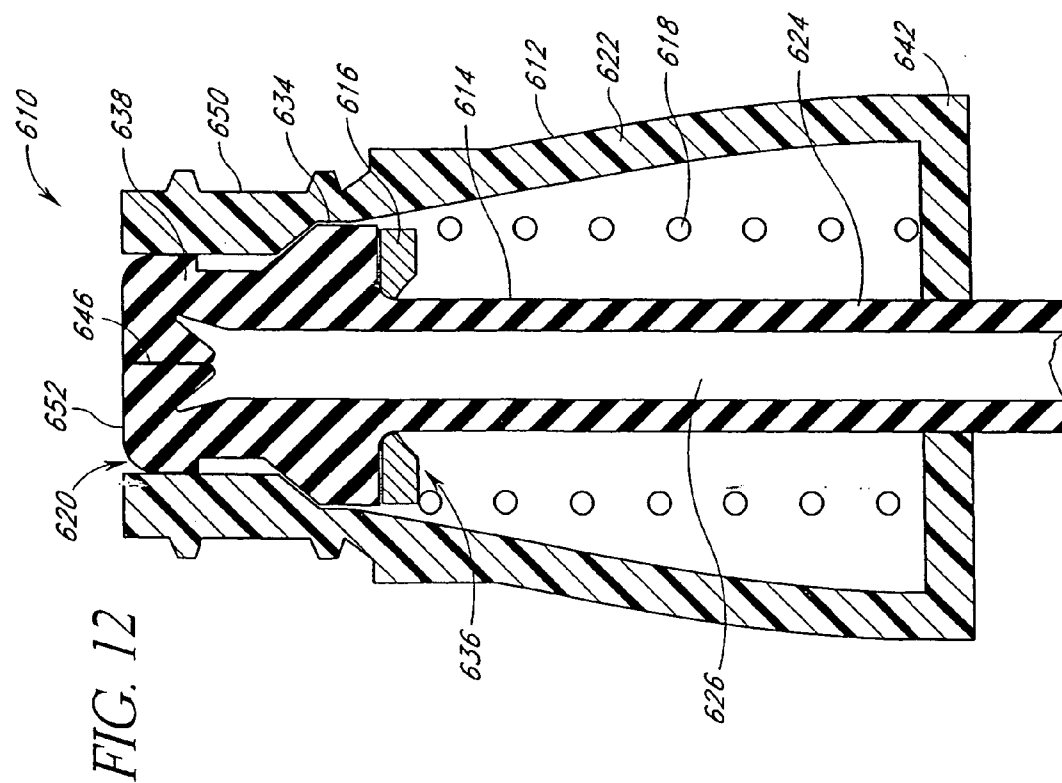
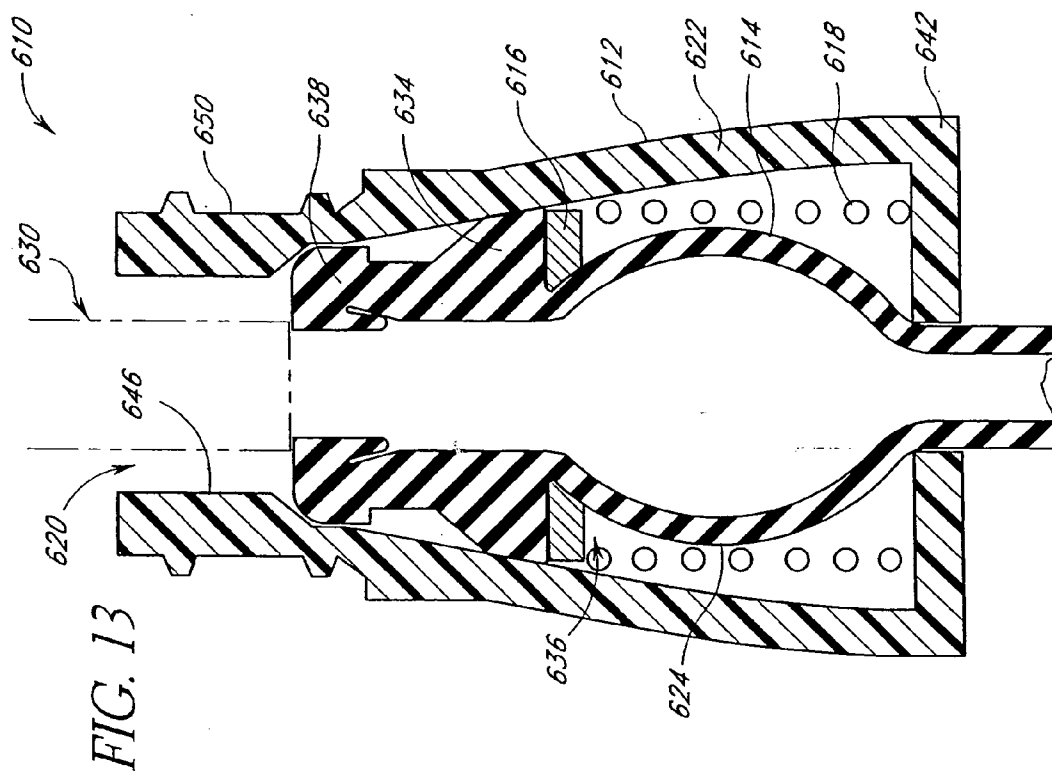


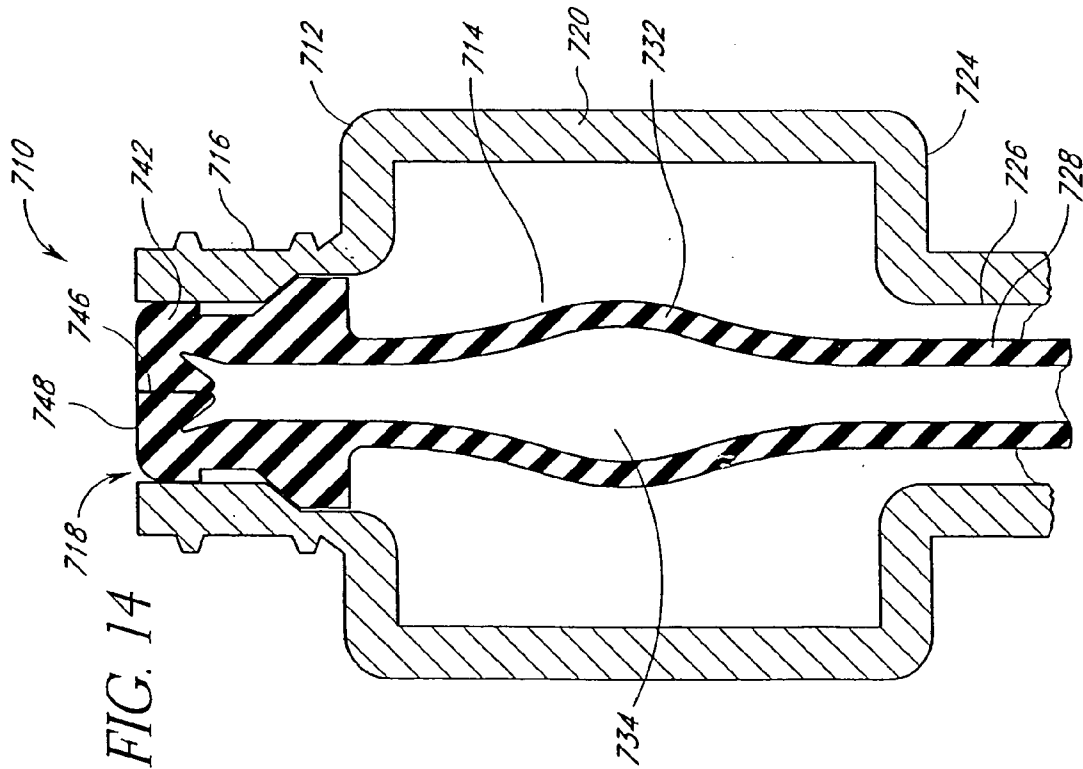
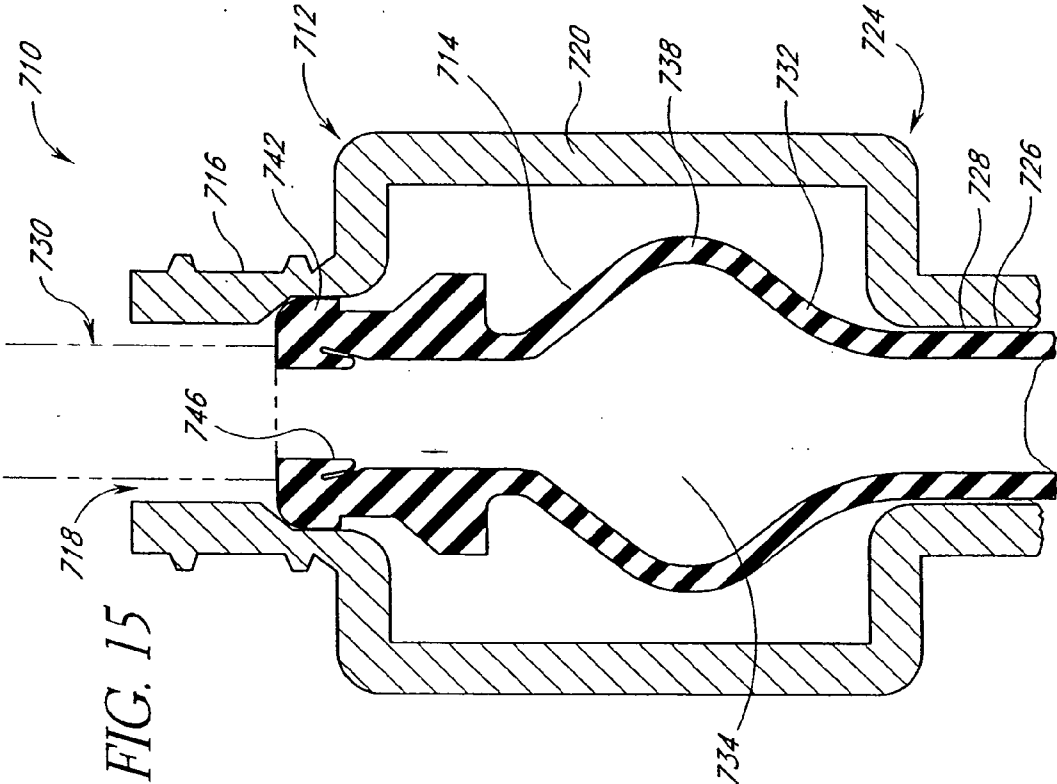












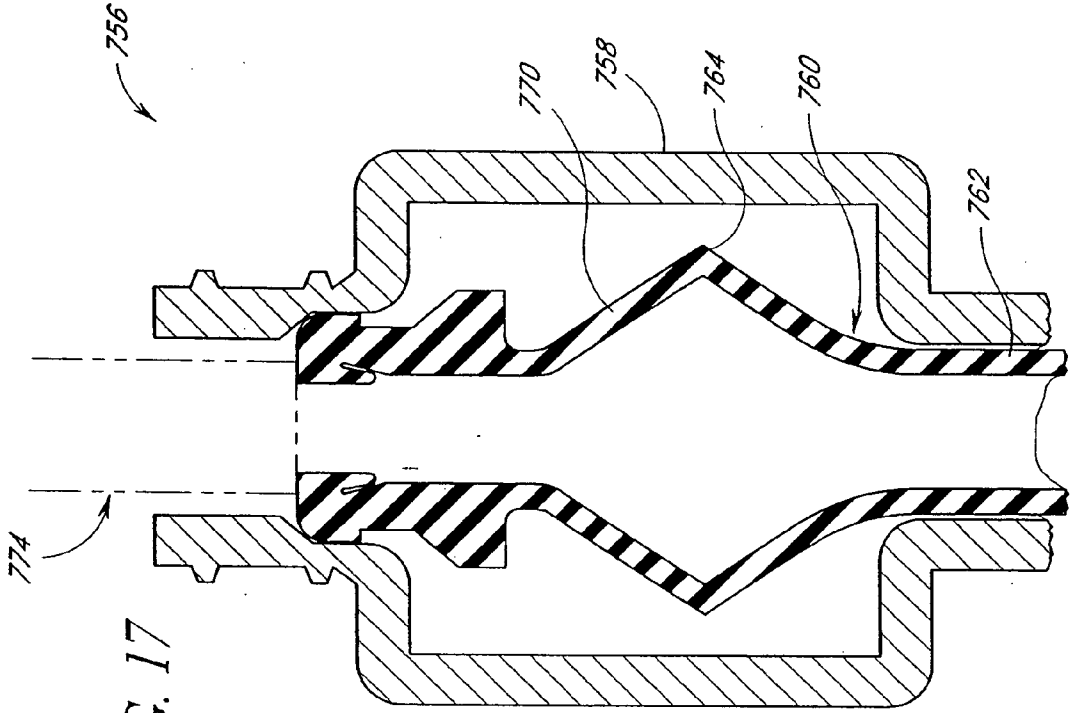


FIG. 17

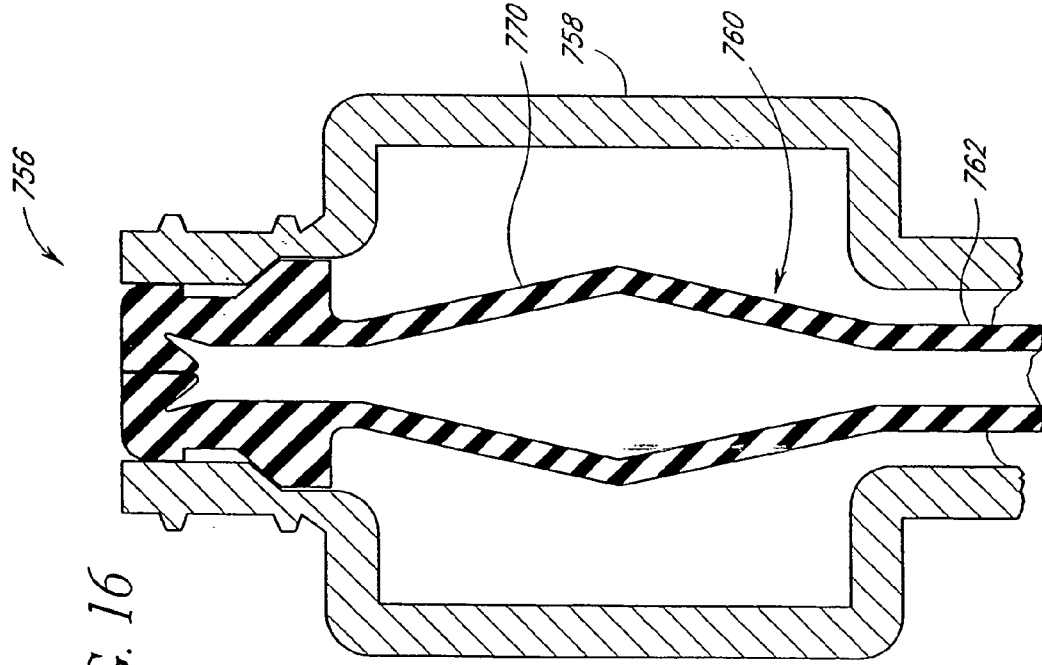
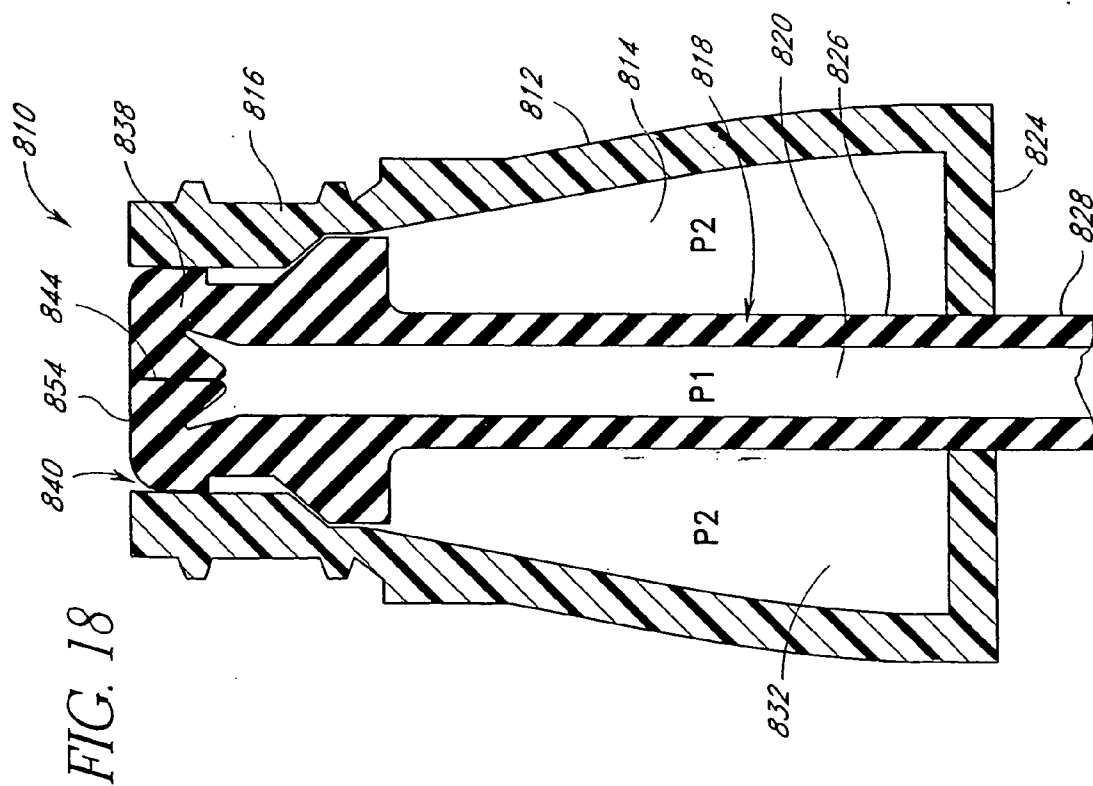
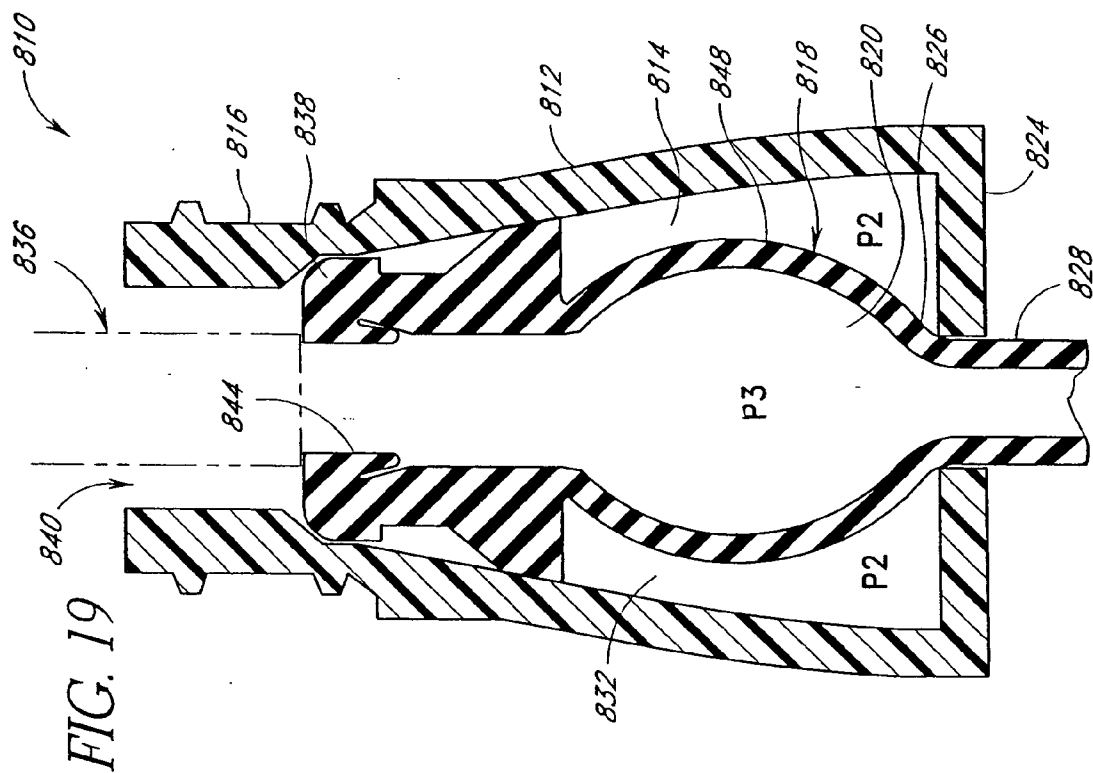


FIG. 16



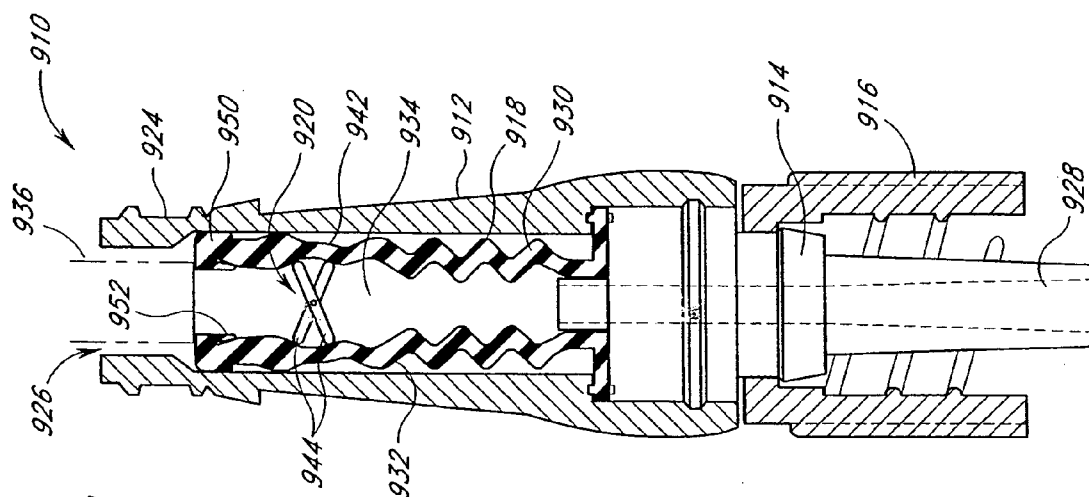


FIG. 21

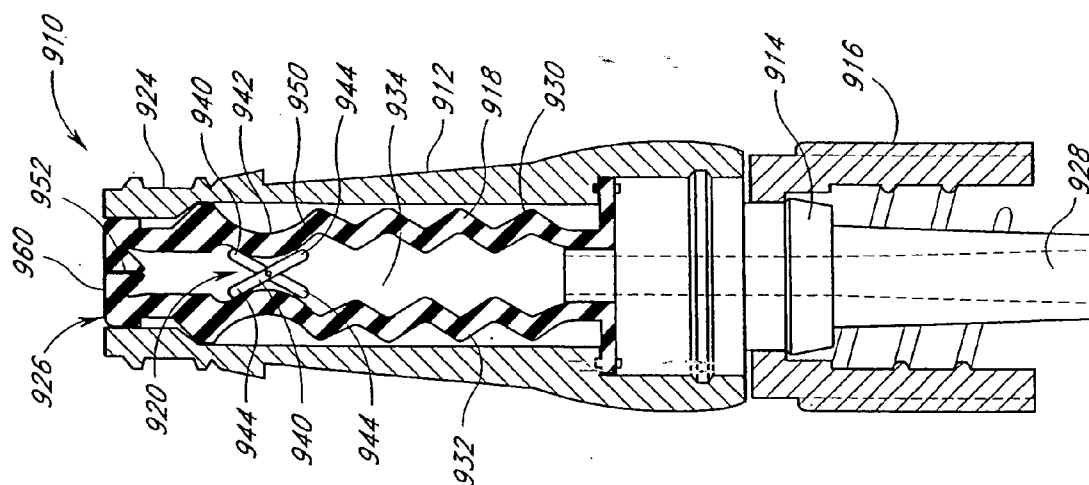


FIG. 20

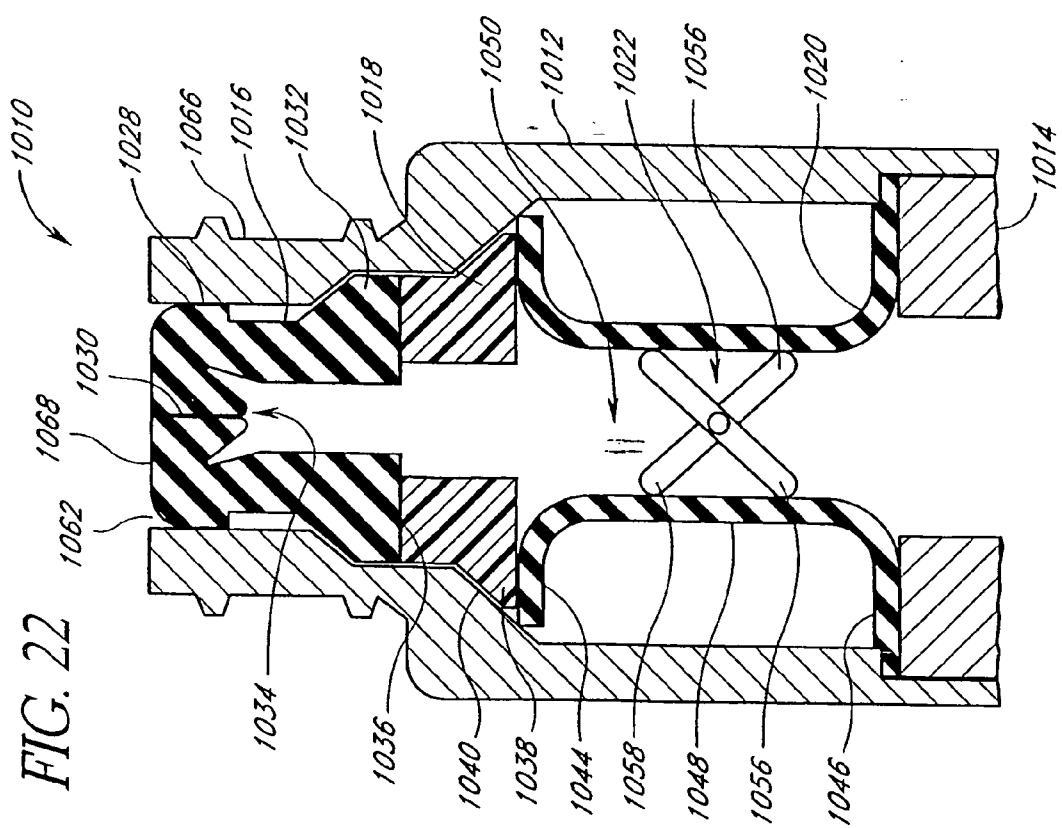
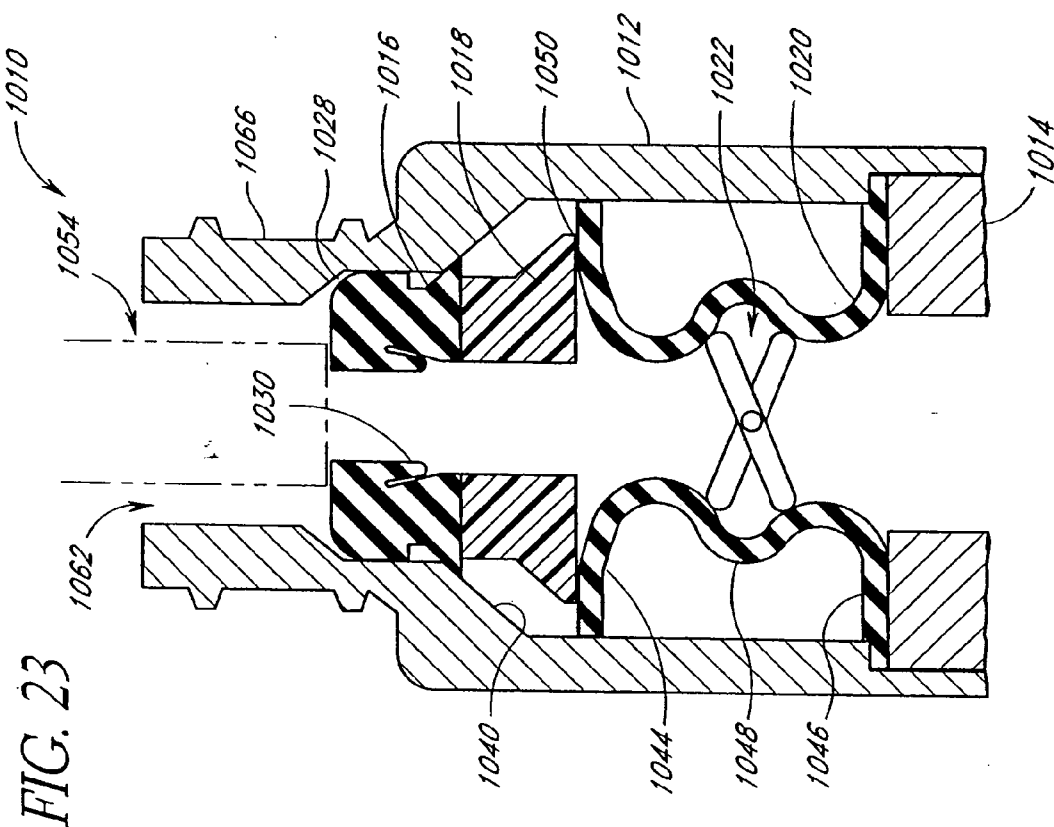


FIG. 24

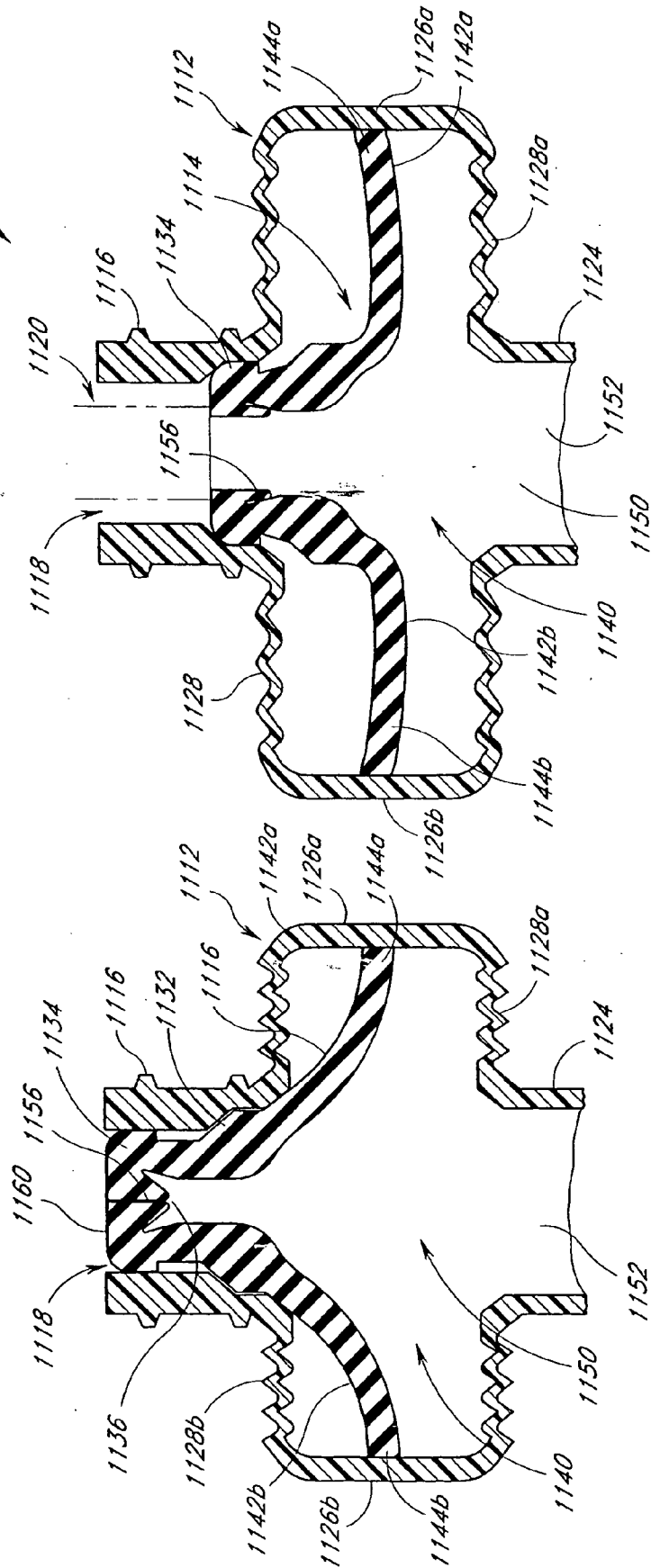
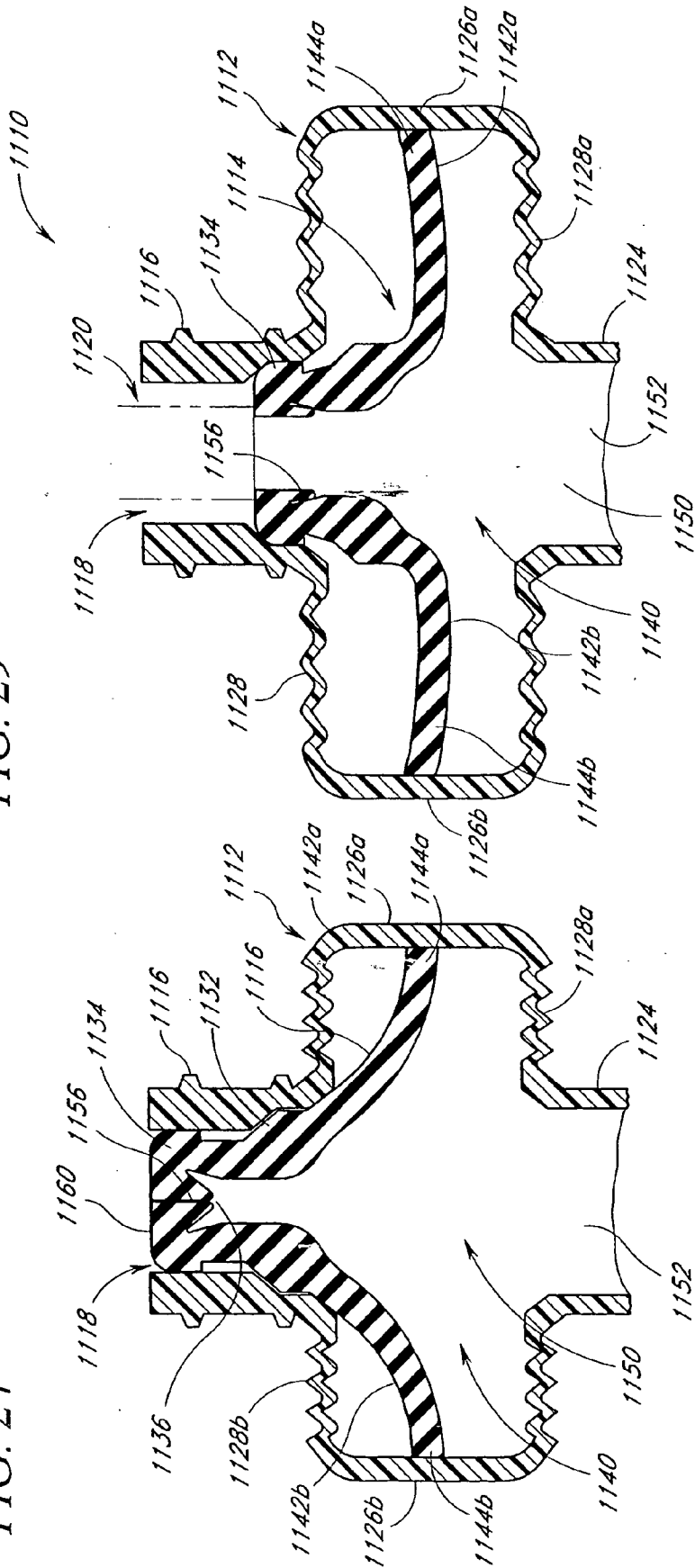


FIG. 25



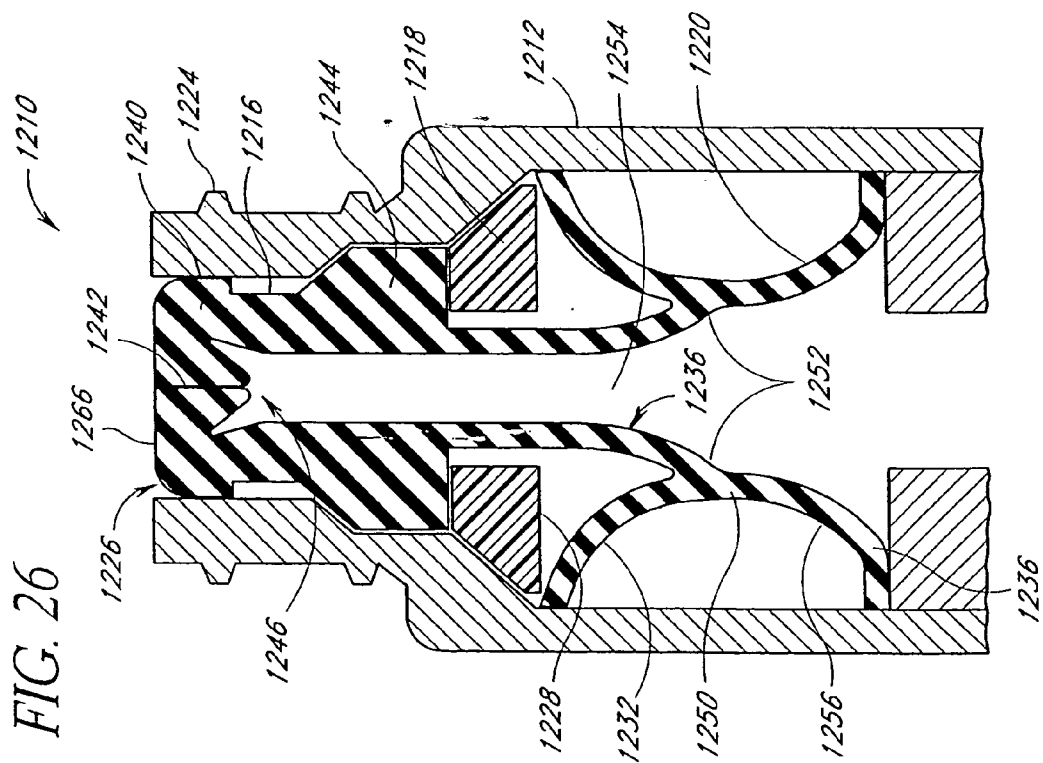
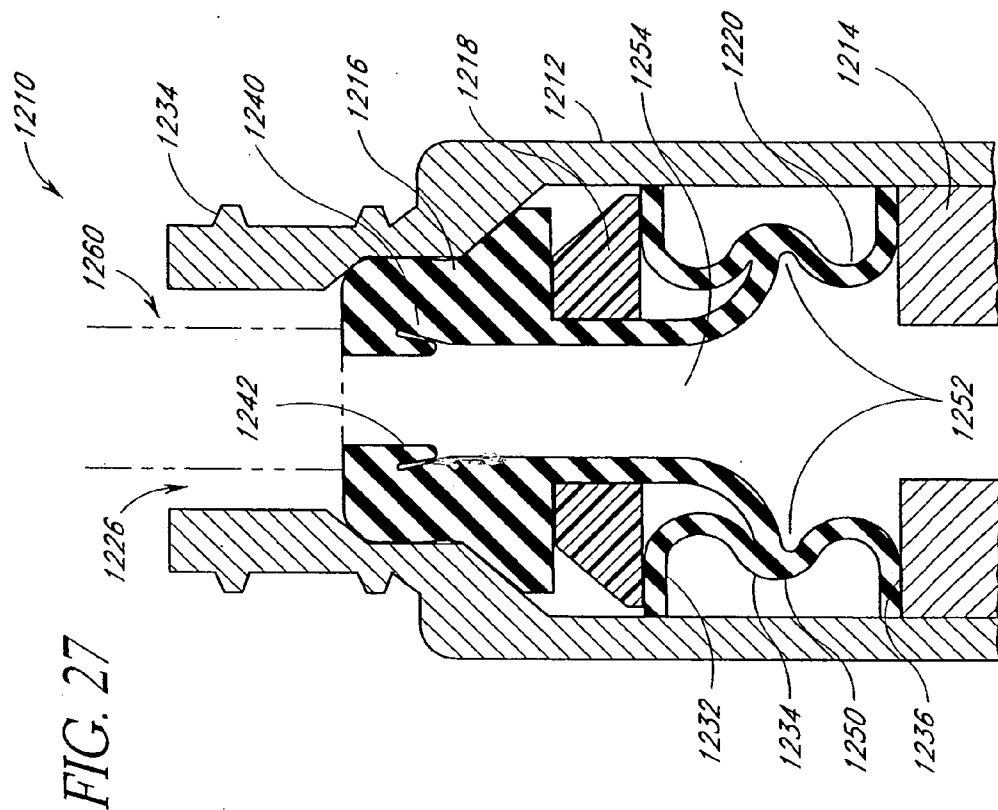


FIG. 28

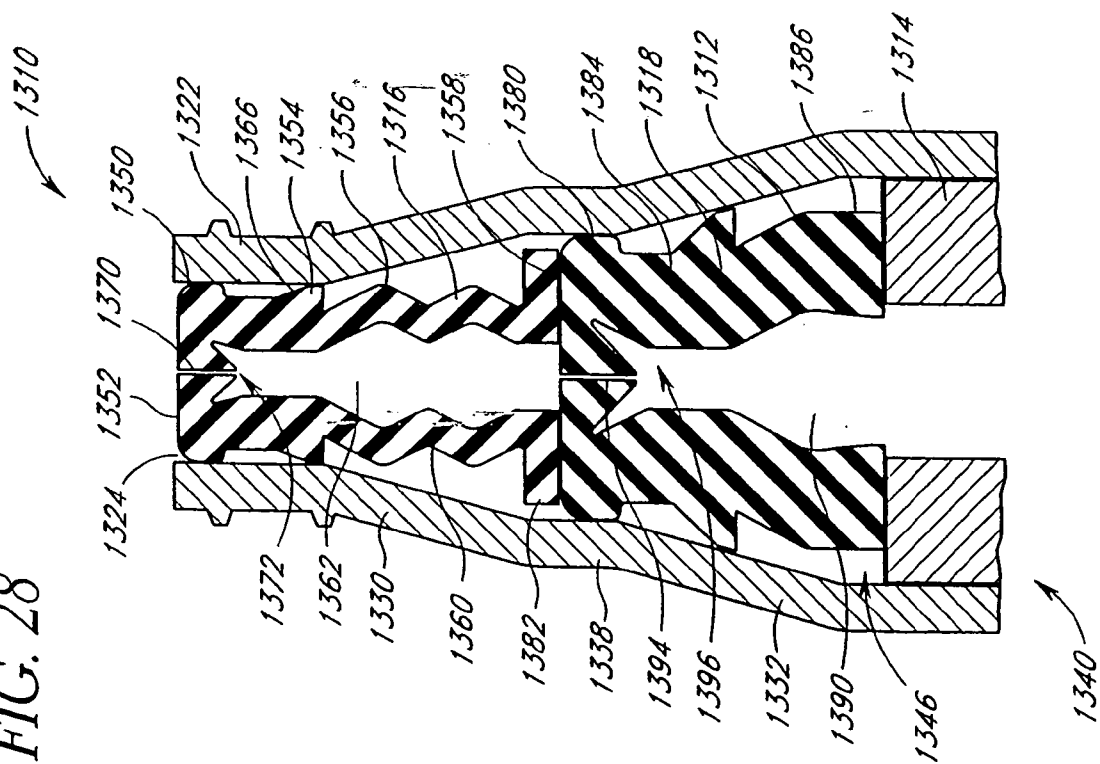


FIG. 29

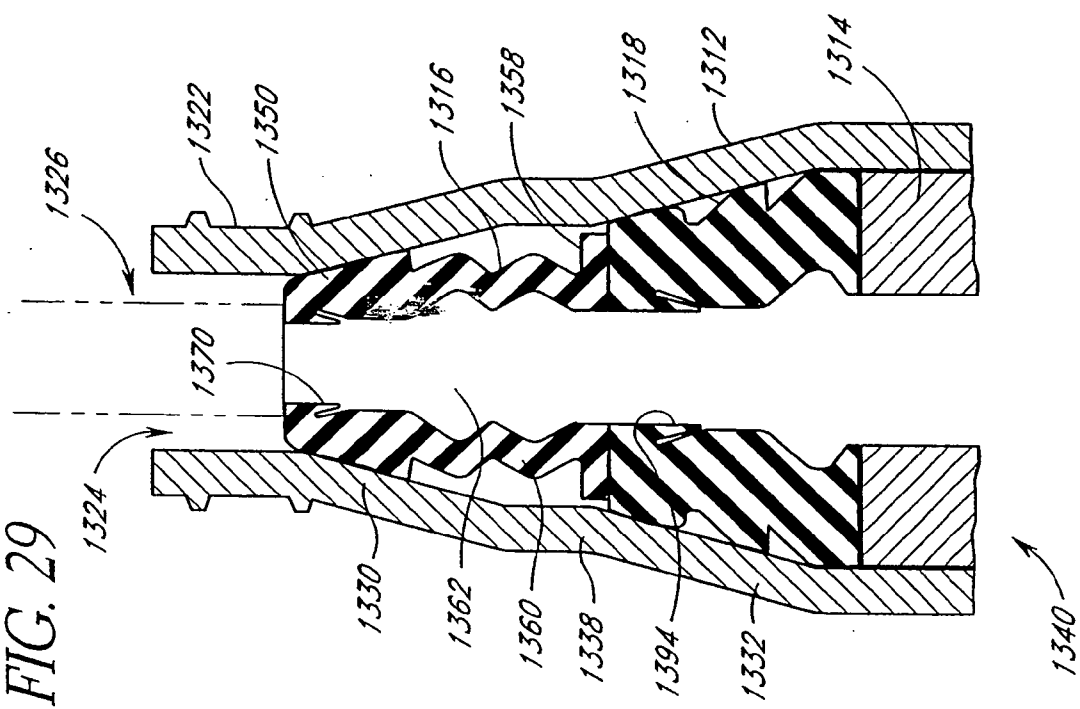


FIG. 30

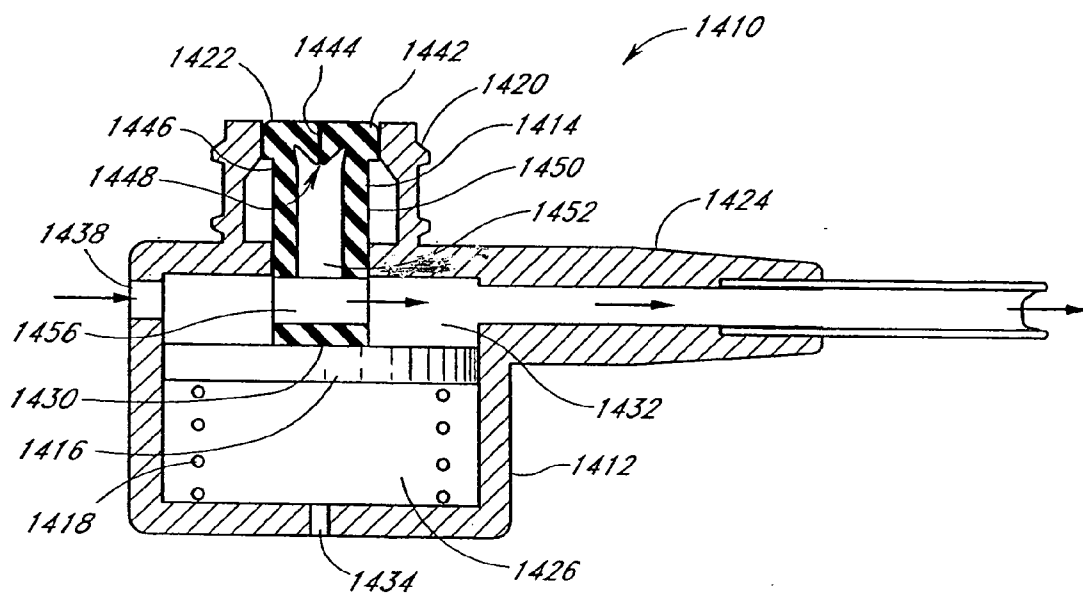


FIG. 31

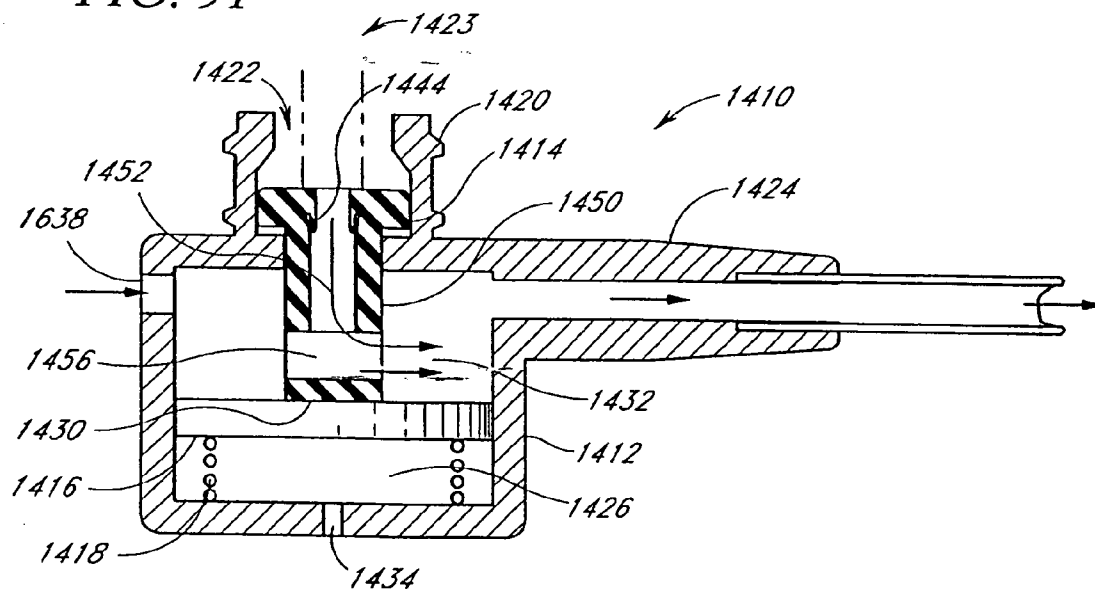
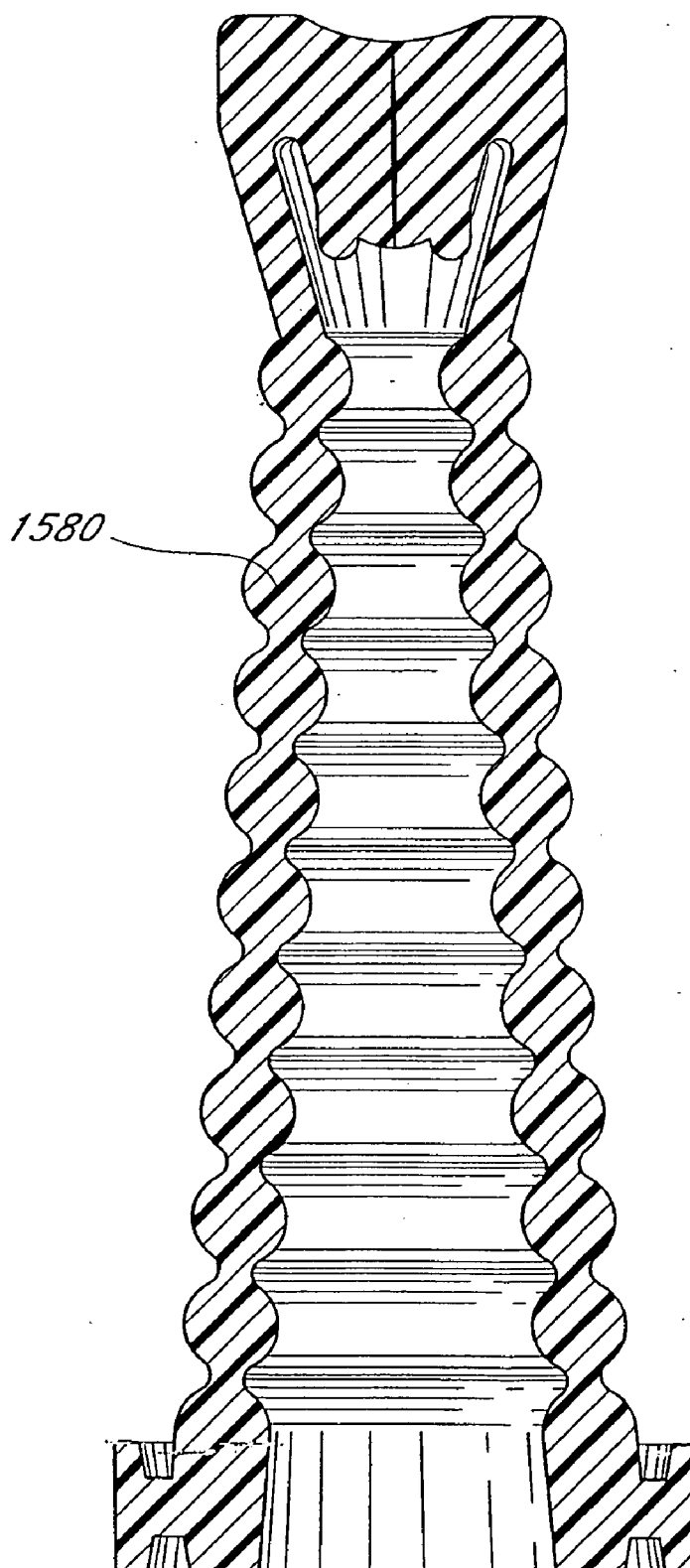


FIG. 32



POSITIVE FLOW VALVE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This application is a continuation of pending U.S. application Ser. No. 11/085,808, filed Mar. 21, 2005, which in a continuation of pending U.S. application Ser. No. 10/163,719, filed Jun. 5, 2002, which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 09/411,988, filed Oct. 4, 1999, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,428,52, which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 08/767,587, filed Dec. 16, 1996, now abandoned, all of which are incorporated by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] This invention relates generally to a medical valve, and in particular to a positive flow valve which, when connected between a medical implement and a catheter to facilitate fluid flow therethrough, induces a positive flow of fluid through a tip of the catheter from the valve upon disconnection of the medical implement, thereby eliminating the problem of blood-clogging or clotting in the catheter.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

[0003] The manipulation of fluids for parenteral administration in hospitals and medical settings routinely involves the use of connectors and valves for facilitating the movement of fluids between two points. Fluid connectors and valves typically employ needles or luers to pierce a septum or seal covering sterile tubing or to pierce a septum or seal of a medicament container of fluid. Fluid then passes from the container or fluid-filled tubing into a syringe or second set of tubing. Since the ready passage of fluids through the connectors and valves is often critical to patient survival, it is imperative that the connectors and valves function reliably and repeatedly. Connectors and valves that malfunction during use may be life-threatening.

[0004] Many connectors or valves, especially those employing several mechanical components, have a relatively high volume of fluid space within them. There is potential for the creation of a "dead space" (i.e. an increase in the fluid containment area which will cause fluid within the patient to be drawn therein) in the fluid space during removal or disconnection of the tubing or other medical implements such as conduits, syringes, IV sets (both peripheral and central lines), piggyback lines, and similar components which can be used in connection with a medical valve. Withdrawal of the medical implement creates a suction force which draws fluid back toward the valve in a phenomenon known as "backflash." This is particularly troublesome in the case where the valve is connected through a catheter to a patient. A suction force is generated by the withdrawal of the medical implement which draws blood from the patient into the catheter. This blood clot and clog the catheter near its tip, rendering it inoperable, and may even result in a clot of blood in the patient, which may prove fatal. Attempts to avoid backflash by coating the inner surface of the catheter near its tip in order to prevent blood from sticking to the interior surfaces of the catheter and clogging it have not been successful.

[0005] The risk of blood clogging of the catheter is significantly heightened where the inner diameter of the catheter is small (e.g., 27 gauge). These small catheters have

the advantage, however, that they reduce the trauma and discomfort caused by insertion into a patient. Because these catheters have a very small passage therethrough, even a small suction force may draw sufficient amount of fluid back through a catheter toward the valve to introduce blood into the catheter tip, which blood may clog the catheter's passage. This back flow is hereinafter referred to as a negative flow. **FIG. 1** shows an example of a catheter **50** having a small portion near the tip **52** that is inserted into the patient, and a valve **54** connected between one end of the catheter and a medical implement **56**. The problem associated with the creation of "dead space" or a drawing of fluid from the catheter towards the valve is illustrated by this Figure. As illustrated therein, when the tip or nose of the medical implement **56** is withdrawn from the valve **54**, the space previously occupied by the implement **56** becomes "dead space." This newly created space has a lower pressure than the fluid within the valve, catheter and patient, such that fluid is drawn into that space, and thus travels from the patient in the direction of the dead space. To avoid blood from being drawn into the catheter, a zero flow or a positive flow, defined as flow or fluid displacement directed from the valve through the catheter tip to the patient, must be effected at the time the medical implement is withdrawn. For a sufficient margin of safety, a positive flow toward the patient is desirable.

[0006] To avoid negative flow or backflash, healthcare workers presently practice the method of disconnecting the valve and simultaneously transferring fluid through the catheter by manipulating the medical implement to induce positive flow. This method is clumsy and difficult, and may result in an inaccurate transfer of medicament.

[0007] One way to induce a positive flow in the catheter is illustrated in **FIGS. 2a** and **2b**. Here, the proximal end of a valve **180** is enclosed with a stylet or displacer **182** upon withdrawal of the medical implement (not shown). An elongated portion **184** of the stylet **182** takes up at least a portion of the fluid space, thereby reducing the volume of the fluid space, and may eliminate the dead space therein. The elongated portion **184**, however, must be sufficiently long to displace more fluid than that volume of fluid which may be drawn from the catheter towards the valve by the withdrawal of the implement, and hence may be difficult to construct for proper performance. The use of the stylet **182** further requires an additional step that may be overlooked by the nurse and the stylet **182** may be misplaced or lost. In addition, this specific type of valve **180** has many significant drawbacks, among them the fact that it does not have a seal with a swabbable surface that can be swabbed after each use for sterility.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] In accordance with the present invention there is provided a positive flow valve which is advantageously utilized between a catheter and another medical implement, and with which the flow of a fluid between the implement and catheter (and a patient within which the catheter is employed). The valve of this invention has several features, no single one of which is solely responsible for its desirable attributes.

[0009] In general, the positive flow valve of the present invention has the attributes of safety, positive flow for

eliminating dead space, reliable and repeatable performance, simplicity of manufacture and use, a seal for use in establishing fluid flow which need not be pierced with a sharp spike or cannula, suitability of high pressure applications, and employment of a valve that is swabbable after use to provide sterility and has a fluid-tight seal at high pressure.

[0010] The present invention is a swabbable, needle-less, positive flow valve that has a fluid space which automatically expands upon insertion of a medical implement and contracts upon withdrawal of the medical implement. When the valve is connected to a catheter, it induces a positive flow from the valve to the catheter tip upon disconnection of the medical implement to avoid the potential problems of blood-clogging. After use, the valve is swabbed in the conventional manner with a suitable substance to maintain sterility. The design of the valve avoids accidental needle or spike sticks. The valve is particularly suited for applications with a catheter where it is desirable to avoid backflash, but may be used for other applications as well.

[0011] Preferably, the valve includes a housing having a first end adapted for receiving one end of medical implement, and having a second end in communication with a catheter. The valve includes means for establishing a fluid flow path through the housing and between the medical implement and the catheter, and which is also useful in occluding the flow path through the housing and thereby preventing fluid flow between the medical implement and catheter.

[0012] Preferably, this means comprises a seal movably positioned within the housing. The seal has a passage therethrough which defines, in at least one area, a fluid containment area. The seal has a first end adapted for engagement by the medical implement. In a first position, the passage through the seal is closed at its first end, and in a second position, when the medical implement is utilized to press the seal distally within the housing of the valve, the passage through the valve is opened.

[0013] Most importantly, when the medical implement is utilized to press the seal distally and establish fluid flow therethrough, the fluid containment area therein increases in total volume, thereby retaining a fluid volume therein. When the medical implement is retracted from the valve, the seal returns to its position wherein the passage is closed at the proximal end thereof, and the volume of the fluid containment area is reduced. This reduction in fluid containment volume results in a volume of fluid being forced towards the catheter (i.e. a positive flow is established).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The preferred embodiments of this invention, illustrating all its features, will now be discussed in detail. These embodiments depict the novel and nonobvious method and valve of this invention shown in the accompanying drawings, which are for illustrative purposes only. The drawings include the following Figures, with like numerals indicating like parts:

[0015] **FIG. 1** is a schematic cross-sectional view of a valve forming a fluid connection between a syringe and a catheter.

[0016] **FIGS. 2a** and **2b** illustrate a prior art valve which includes a stylet having an elongated portion after use to induce a positive flow.

[0017] **FIG. 3** is a schematic cross-sectional view of a roller-clamp valve which may be manually activated to induce a positive flow through a catheter tip from the valve.

[0018] **FIG. 4** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the first embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0019] **FIG. 5** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 4** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0020] **FIG. 6** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the second embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0021] **FIG. 7** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 6** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0022] **FIG. 8** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the third embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0023] **FIG. 9** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 8** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0024] **FIG. 10** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the fourth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0025] **FIG. 11** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 10** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0026] **FIG. 12** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the fifth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0027] **FIG. 13** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 12** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0028] **FIG. 14** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the sixth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0029] **FIG. 15** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 14** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0030] **FIG. 16** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the seventh embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0031] **FIG. 17** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 16** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0032] **FIG. 18** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the eighth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0033] **FIG. 19** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 18** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0034] **FIG. 20** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the ninth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0035] **FIG. 21** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 20** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0036] **FIG. 22** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the tenth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0037] **FIG. 23** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 22** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0038] **FIG. 24** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the eleventh embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0039] **FIG. 25** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 24** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0040] **FIG. 26** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the twelfth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0041] **FIG. 27** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 26** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0042] **FIG. 28** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the thirteenth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0043] **FIG. 29** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 28** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0044] **FIG. 30** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of the fourteenth embodiment of the positive-flow valve of this invention before compressing the seal.

[0045] **FIG. 31** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view similar to **FIG. 30** showing the valve during compression of the seal.

[0046] **FIG. 32** is a longitudinal cross-sectional view of an alternative seal with a side wall formed with circular tires.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0047] The Applicant has recognized that a roller clamp may be used to induce a positive flow in a medical valve. The use of a roller clamp in a medical valve **190** to create a positive flow upon disconnection of a medical implement (not shown) is illustrated in **FIG. 3**. The roller-clamp valve **190** is activated manually by sliding an external switch **192** to push a roller **194** against tubing **196** which connects a medical implement **198** and a catheter (not shown) to cause a positive pressure therein, thereby creating a positive flow through the catheter tip (not shown). The flow through the tubing **196** can be opened by sliding the switch **192** in the reverse direction.

[0048] This valve **190**, however, has the same disadvantage of requiring an additional step of operation as does the valve with a stylet illustrated in **FIGS. 2a** and **2b**, and also does not include a seal having a swabbable surface. Furthermore, the size of the roller **194** must be sufficiently large to induce a displacement of fluid within the tube which is greater than the amount of fluid which may be drawn by the

vacuum force (so as to generate a positive flow), which may require a bulky valve that is hard to operate.

First Embodiment

[0049] **FIGS. 4** and **5** illustrate a first embodiment of a valve **210** in accordance with the present invention. In general, this valve **210** includes a valve body or housing **212**, a support member **214**, a seal **216** defining an inner cavity **218**, a pair of clam shells **220a** and **220b**, and a spring **222**. These components are assembled, as depicted in **FIG. 4**, without the need for a spike element. The inner cavity **218** forms an expandable fluid space inside the valve **210**. As discussed below, the clam shells **220a/220b** are constructed to cause the volume of the fluid space to expand or increase upon insertion of a medical implement and to contract or decrease upon withdrawal of the medical implement.

[0050] The body or housing **212** has an upper conduit **226** near a proximal end **228**, desirably with a circular opening **230** that is adapted to receive the medical implement. A side wall portion **232** is preferably tapered to cooperate with the clam shells **220a/220b**. The body **212** has an upper ledge **234** formed between the proximal end **228** and the side wall portion **232**. There is desirably a threaded portion on the housing **212** adjacent the circular opening **230** in the top of the upper conduit **226**, as best seen in **FIG. 4**. Note that “proximal” is used to denote the end of the valve **210** and other components at or near the body opening **230**, while “distal” is used to denote the opposite end of the valve.

[0051] In the first embodiment, the upper conduit **226** is adapted to receive the tip or nose **236** of an ANSI standard syringe **238**, as shown in phantom in **FIG. 5**. It is, however, contemplated that the outer diameter of the upper conduit **226** can be of any size to accommodate the attachment of other connector devices thereto. Advantageously, the proximal end of the upper conduit **226** can be equipped with a locking mechanism to facilitate locking of the valve **210** to a variety of connector devices. For example, referring to **FIG. 4**, the threaded portion of the housing **212** are preferably provided such that the housing **212** can be locked into any compatible Luer-Lock device known to those with skill in the art. The housing **212** of the first embodiment according to this invention includes conventional Luer-Lock threads **240** on the outer diameter of the upper conduit **226**.

[0052] The support member **214** has at its distal end the inner conduit **242** which may be connected to a terminal end of a catheter (not shown). The support member **214** serves as a support and attachment device for the seal **216** by holding the seal **216** in place inside the internal cavity **244** of the housing **212**. The inner conduit **242** and inner cavity **218** of the seal **216** present a continuous passageway for fluid during use.

[0053] The seal **216** is prepared from a resilient material that is flexible, inert, and impermeable to fluid, such as silicon. The seal **216** has a seal cap **248** with a generally flat top surface **250**, a shoulder **252**, a side wall **254**, and a base **256**. The side wall **254** advantageously is comprised of wall portions **258** which deform in an accordion-like fashion and assist in the reformation of the seal **216** to close the housing opening **230** upon withdrawal of the syringe **238**. During compression of the seal **216**, the wall portions **258** expand outwardly in the radial direction. The interior of the seal **216** is hollow to provide the inner cavity **218**, as best seen in

FIG. 4. There are preferably gaps between the wall portions 258 which facilitate deformation and reformation of the seal 216. The shoulder 252 engages the upper ledge 234 provided in the upper conduit 226 of the housing 212 such that the upper ledge 234 confines the movement of the shoulder 252 toward the opening 230 to prevent the seal 216 from being blown through the opening 230 under high pressure in the inner cavity 218 of the seal 216.

[0054] The seal cap 248 reseals the valve 210 at the opening 230, with the top surface 250 of the seal 216 approximately flush with or slightly above or below the opening 230 upon removal of the medical implement 238. Preferably, the seal cap 248 substantially fills the opening 230 in the top of the upper conduit 226. After assembly, the top surface 250 of the seal cap 248 is essentially flush with the opening 230, so that the seal cap 248 can be swabbed with alcohol or other disinfectant without leakage of the disinfectant into the valve 210. Therefore, it is preferable that the top surface 250 be exposed so that it may be swabbed with a disinfectant.

[0055] To provide a fluid-tight seal at the opening 230 and to eliminate the need for a spike element to induce fluid flow upon insertion of a medical implement, the seal cap 248 has a unique shape and includes a precut slit 259, also having a unique shape. The seal cap 248 desirably has an oval or elliptical shape with a major axis having a length larger than the inner diameter of the circular opening 230 such that the oval seal cap 248 substantially fills the opening 230 in the top of the upper conduit 226 in the decompressed state. The precut slit 259 in the seal cap 248 is squeezed shut by the circular opening 230 in the decompressed state, as seen in **FIG. 4**. In its resting state, the precut slit 259 is open. During compression of the seal 216 by insertion of a medical implement such as the syringe 238, as illustrated in **FIG. 5**, the precut slit 259 returns to its resting state and opens, as the seal cap 248 is allowed to stretch in the portion of the upper conduit 226 which has a larger inner diameter. Fluid is thus allowed to pass through the slit 259. Note that the terms “compressed state” and “decompressed state” are used conveniently to refer to compression and decompression of the seal 216 by insertion and withdrawal of the medical implement 238 along the longitudinal axis of the seal 216. The terms do not relate to the radial compression of the seal cap 248 by the opening 230 of the housing 212.

[0056] To further assist in creating a fluid-tight seal in the decompressed state, the seal 216 of **FIG. 4** advantageously includes the enlarged, internal, pressure responsive member 260 which is integral with the seal cap 248. The pressure responsive member 260 enables the valve 210 to maintain a fluid-tight seal even at very high pressures sometimes experienced in medical applications, particularly when the valve 210 is connected to a patient's artery.

[0057] As shown in **FIGS. 4 and 5**, the clam shells 220a/220b are desirably identical pieces disposed opposite one another symmetrically inside the valve body 212. They are preferably made of a firm material such as a hard plastic. The external surface 264a/264b of each clam shell 220a/220b is tapered to cooperate with the tapered side wall portion 232 of the housing 212, and is configured to slide along the side wall portion 232 during compression and decompression. The internal surfaces 266a/266b of the clam shells 220a/220b cooperate with one another to squeeze a

portion of the seal side wall 254, preferably adjacent the shoulder 252, to form a constricted portion 267 of the seal 216. The proximal ends 268a/268b of the clam shells 220a/220b engage the shoulder 252 of the seal 216 to facilitate movement of the clam shells 220a/220b with the compression of the seal 216. The internal surfaces 266a/266b preferably are shaped to cause the constricted portion 267 to be substantially circular. In this embodiment, each internal surface 266a/266b has a semi-circular, longitudinal groove that squeezes the seal 216.

[0058] The spring 222 is disposed between the distal ends of the clam shells 220a/220b and the base 256 of the seal 216, but desirably a hard retaining disk 270 is provided adjacent the base 256 of the seal 216 to provide better support for the spring 222 and the seal 216. In the decompressed state shown in **FIG. 4**, the spring 222 may be relaxed or be in slight compression to exert a force on the seal 216 through the clam shells 220a/220b to keep the seal 216 closed. During insertion of the syringe 238, the spring 222 is compressed and stores potential energy from the compression, as illustrated in **FIG. 5**. Upon withdrawal of the syringe 238, the spring 222 releases the potential energy and pushes the clam shells 220a/220b proximally to close the seal 216, as shown in **FIG. 4**. The spring 222 is preferably not attached or bonded to either the clam shells 220a/220b or the retaining disk 270 for ease of assembly. Although **FIGS. 4-5** show a helical spring 222, any suitable spring known to those of skill in the art may be used.

[0059] The seal 216 is desirably relaxed longitudinally in the decompressed state (**FIG. 4**), and compressed longitudinally in the compressed state (**FIG. 5**). Alternatively, the seal 216 may be stretched longitudinally in tension by the spring 222 in the decompressed state and be relaxed or slightly compressed longitudinally in the compressed state. The base 256 of the seal 216 advantageously fits snugly and securely into an annular groove 274 provided in the retaining disk 270 and an annular groove 276 provided in the support member 214. The annular grooves 274,276 form a locking mechanism to support and secure the seal 216 within the cavity 244 of the housing 212.

[0060] To illustrate valve activation, **FIG. 5** shows the compressed state of the valve 210 upon insertion of the syringe 238. A medical implement other than a syringe as known to those of skill in the art may be used. The nose 236 of the syringe 238 is placed on the seal cap 248 inside the opening 230 of the housing 212. The application of pressure on the syringe 238 creates pressure on the seal cap 248, and the resulting downward pressure compresses the seal 216. This pushes the seal cap 248 away from the circular opening 230 and toward the lower portion of the housing cavity 244 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 259 to open. The downward movement is facilitated by the compression of the spring 222 which stores the potential energy of compression and by the gaps between the wall portions 258 of the side wall 254 of the seal 216. Fluid is now able to flow into the syringe 238, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. **FIG. 5** shows the valve 210 opened by insertion of the nose 236 of the syringe 238 into the opening 230. For intravenous applications, the valve 210 can be oriented in the position diagrammed in **FIGS. 4 and 5**, or it can be rotated 180° such that fluid flows in the opposite direction.

[0061] In the compressed state shown in FIG. 5, the inner cavity 218 of the seal 216 generally contracts (becomes shorter) as compared to the decompressed state shown in FIG. 4. The constricted portion 267 of the inner cavity 218, defined by the clam shells 220a/220b, however, expands (becomes larger) in volume when the seal 216 is in the compressed state. This results from a movement of the clam shells 220a/220b apart from one another as they slide along the tapered side wall 232 of the housing 212. The amount of general contraction of the seal 216 in relation to the amount of expansion of the constricted portion 267 during compression determine whether the valve 210 generates a positive, negative, or zero flow upon decompression, as discussed below.

[0062] Upon removal of the syringe 238 from the upper conduit 226, as shown in FIG. 4, the seal 216 is free to move toward its decompressed state, and the clam shells 220a/220b are pushed proximally toward the opening 230. The movement causes a general expansion of the inner cavity 218 (i.e., the cavity increases in length), but causes a contraction (i.e., reduction in size) of the volume of the constricted portion 267 of the seal 216. If the volume change associated with the contraction of the constricted portion 267 equals the volume change associated with the expansion of the inner cavity 218, the fluid space or inner cavity will have zero flow. If the increase in volume associated with the expansion of the inner cavity 218 is greater than the reduction in volume associated with the contraction of the constricted portion 267, there will be a net gain in fluid space, resulting in an undesirable negative flow toward the valve 210 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). If the reduction in volume associated with the contraction of the constricted portion 267 is greater than the increase in volume associated with the expansion of the inner cavity 218, there will be a desirable positive flow from the valve 210 through the catheter tip (not shown). Thus, for the valve 210 to be a positive-flow valve requires that the clam shells be configured to allow greater expansion of the constricted portion 267 (i.e., an increase in fluid volume in that area of the seal 216) than the general contraction volume change associated with the expansion of the inner cavity 218 of the seal 216 upon compression and, hence, greater contraction (i.e., decrease in fluid volume within that area of the seal) of the constricted portion 267 than the general expansion (i.e., increase in fluid volume in that area of the seal) of the seal 216 upon decompression. In other words, for the valve 210 to induce positive flow upon disconnection of the medical implement 238 therefrom, the total fluid volume within the valve 210 must decrease. In the instant case, this decrease in fluid volume is effectuated by causing the fluid volume within the seal to decrease as between its compressed (when syringe attached) and uncompressed (when syringe detached) states. This reduction or decrease in available fluid volume within the valve 210 causes fluid to flow towards the catheter/patient, preventing blood from being drawn into the catheter.

[0063] That the valve 210 is advantageously configured to be a positive-flow valve 210 eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 210 as the syringe 238 is withdrawn, as illustrated in FIG. 4. Furthermore, as the syringe 238 is withdrawn, the slit 259 remains open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 248 is squeezed by the circular opening 230 at the top of the upper conduit 226. This further assists in eliminating dead space and avoiding

backflash. This feature is particularly advantageous in the case where the valve 210 is connected through a catheter to a patient, because it prevents blood from being drawn into the catheter and clogging it. This invention therefore eliminates a significant risk by solving the problem of backflash.

[0064] As the seal 216 is free to move to its decompressed state, it essentially fills the opening 230. The ability of the seal 216 to return to its original shape and be deformed in its decompressed state is determined by the resiliency of the material used to prepare the seal 216. Advantageously, the ability of the seal 216 to return to its decompressed state is facilitated by the spring 222 and the gaps between the wall portions 258 of the seal 216. The ability of the seal 216 to deform reversibly and return to its decompressed state is particularly useful because (1) it immediately stops fluid flow through the valve 210, and (2) it maintains sterility of the valve.

[0065] The ability of the seal 216 to return reversibly to its decompressed state permits reuse of the valve 210. Following disconnection, and before reuse, the surface 250 of the seal cap 248 is essentially flush with the opening 230 of the housing 212. Thus, this flush surface 250 can advantageously be sterilized with alcohol or other surface-decontaminating substances. The support member 214 and body 212 advantageously shield both connections from the surrounding environment to protect the sterility of the connection.

[0066] A cover cap (not shown) can be supplied to fit over the upper conduit 226 as further protection for the surface 250 of the seal cap 248 when not in use. Such a cover cap, however, is not needed to maintain sterility since the seal 216 may be swabbed with a disinfectant before and/or after each use. Reversibility of the seal 216 makes the valve 210 particularly attractive as a connector valve to provide fluid communication between two fluid lines. Therefore, the present invention provides for placing a first fluid line in communication with a second fluid line using the valve 210 disclosed herein. The reversibility of the valve 210 permits multiple fluid lines to be successively added, for example, to a fluid line in direct communication with a patient's vein. Since the valve 210 is easily sterilized and sealable, fluid lines can be added and removed without disconnecting venous contact of the catheter.

[0067] The valve body 212 and support member 214 are preferably prepared from a hard plastic, but it is additionally contemplated that the valve 210 could be prepared from other medically inert materials known to those skilled in the art. Another feature of this invention is that it relies neither on a needle nor on a spike in order to establish fluid flow through the valve. This completely eliminates the risk of skin puncture or fear of puncture during use and manufacture. It also eliminates coring of the seal 216 by a spike element and all the risks associated therewith. Further, the fluid flow rate is not limited by the size of a through passage in a needle or spike, as is the case in some prior art valves.

[0068] As shown in FIG. 4, another feature of the invention is that the upper ledge 234 confines the movement of the shoulder 252 toward the opening 250 to prevent the seal 216 from being blown through the opening 230 under high pressure in the cavity 218. This makes the valve 210 particularly suited for high pressure applications.

Second Embodiment

[0069] In a second embodiment of the present invention illustrated in **FIGS. 6 and 7**, the valve **310** includes a valve body or housing **312**, a support member **314**, a skirt **316**, a seal **318**, a resilient member **320**, and a pair of clam shells **322a/322b**. The housing **312** is desirably similar to the housing **212** of **FIG. 4** and has a tapered side wall **324**.

[0070] Referring to **FIGS. 6 and 7**, the second embodiment of the valve **310** has a bell-shaped skirt **316**. The skirt **316** has an annular ring **328** which is disposed toward an inner conduit **330** of the support member **314**. The skirt **316** creates a shield for the inner conduit **330**. This inner conduit **330** is preferably cylindrical in shape and slightly tapered. The inner conduit may be connected to a terminal end of a catheter (not shown), which has an opposite, open end that is generally inserted into a patient. The support member **314** serves as a support and attachment device for the seal **318** by holding the seal **318** in place inside the housing **312**.

[0071] The support member **314** also serves as a support and attachment device for the skirt **316**. As best seen in **FIG. 6**, the support member **314** has an edge portion **332** which engages a ledge **334** of the skirt **316** in assembly. This attachment secures the skirt **316** in place. The skirt **316** desirably includes a Luer-Lock portion **336** that enables the valve **310** to be removably attached to, for example, a fluid line or catheter connected to a patient. It is noted that the valve **310** in this embodiment includes a skirt **316** separate from the housing **312** for ease of assembly. A different embodiment can provide a unitary member which replaces the housing **312** and skirt **316**. It is therefore contemplated that such an embodiment would fall within the scope of this invention.

[0072] The seal **318** is similar to the seal **210** of **FIG. 4**. The seal **318** is also preferably silicon and has a similar seal cap **340** with a precut slit **342**, shoulder **344**, and pressure responsive member **348**. These components serve the same function as those of the seal **210**. Instead of a side wall formed with wall portions **258**, the seal **318** has a side wall **350** that is generally circular cylindrical and has a distal portion **352** that is sized to be slip-fitted with the proximal end **354** of the inner conduit **330** of the support member **314**. During compression of the seal **318**, the side wall **350** simply slides over the proximal end **354** of the inner conduit **330**, forming a fluid-tight seal therewith. The seal **318** defines an inner cavity **358** above the proximal end **354** of the inner conduit **330**. The inner cavity **358** forms an expandable fluid space inside the valve **310**. The inner conduit **330** and inner cavity **358** comprise aligned hollow tubes in fluid communication with each other when the precut slit **342** of the seal **318** opens during compression of the seal **310**.

[0073] Similar in form and function to the clam shells **220a/220b** of **FIGS. 4 and 5**, the clam shells **322a/322b** are constructed to cause an increase in fluid space upon insertion of a medical implement into the valve **310** and a decrease in fluid space upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as a syringe **362** partially shown in phantom in **FIG. 7**. The internal surfaces **364a/364b** of the clam shells desirably have longitudinal grooves that cooperate with one another to squeeze a portion of the seal side wall **350** to form a constricted portion **366** thereof.

[0074] Instead of the spring **222** in **FIG. 4**, the second embodiment employs the resilient member **320** disposed

between the clam shells **322a/322b** and the support member **314**. The resilient member **320** advantageously is inert and impermeable to fluid such as silicon, and includes wall portions **368** which deform in an accordion-like fashion and assist in the reformation of the seal **318** to close the housing opening **370** upon withdrawal of the syringe **362**. The resilient member **320** thus is similar in construction with and serves the same function as the spring **222** of the seal **210** of **FIGS. 4 and 5**. It is contemplated that a spring (not shown) similar to the spring **222** of **FIG. 4** may be used in place of the resilient member **320**, as may other suitable structures known to those of skill in the art.

[0075] As shown in **FIGS. 6 and 7**, the resilient member **320** has a base **346**. The base **346** fits snugly and securely within an annular groove **374** provided in the housing **312** and an annular groove **377** provided in the support member **314**, as shown in **FIG. 6**. The annular grooves **376,377** hence form a locking mechanism to support and secure the resilient member **320** within the housing **312**. The shoulder **344** engages an upper ledge **382** provided in an upper conduit **384** of the housing **312** such that the upper ledge **382** confines the movement of the shoulder **344** toward the opening **370** to prevent the seal **318** from being blown through the opening **370** under high pressure in the inner cavity **358** of the seal **318**.

[0076] The resilient member **320** is desirably relaxed or slightly compressed longitudinally in the decompressed state (**FIG. 6**), and compressed longitudinally in the compressed state (**FIG. 7**). The resilient member **320** is desirably not attached or bonded to either of the clam shells **322a/322b** or the housing **312**.

[0077] **FIG. 7** illustrates compression and **FIG. 6** illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe **362** is placed on the seal cap **340** inside the opening **370** of the housing **312**, and the application of pressure on the syringe **362** creates pressure on the seal cap **340**. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap **340** away from the circular opening **370** and toward the distal lower portion of the housing **312** which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit **342** to open. The side wall **350** slides over the proximal end **354** of the inner conduit **330**, and the resilient member **320** deforms in an accordion-like manner, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe **362**, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient.

[0078] The compression of the seal **318** shown in **FIG. 7** generally causes a contraction or reduction in the volume of the inner cavity **358** of the seal **318**. The valve **310** has a net gain in volume of the inner cavity **318**, however, because the general reduction in volume within the inner cavity **358** is less than an increase in volume within the constricted portion **366** of the inner cavity **358** defined by the clam shells **322a/322b**. The expansion results from the movement of the clam shells **322a/322b** apart from one another during compression, facilitated by the tapered side wall **324** of the housing **312**.

[0079] **FIG. 6** illustrates the valve after withdrawal of the syringe **362**. The seal **318** returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening **370**, and the clam shells **322a/322b** are pushed proximally toward the opening **370** by the resilient member **320**. Because of the contraction of

the inner cavity 358 at the constricted portion 366 by the clam shells 322a/322b, there is a net loss or reduction in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 310 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 310 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 318. This is further assisted by the seal 318 with the slit 342 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 340 is squeezed by the upper conduit 384.

[0080] In addition, the valve 310 can be reused because the seal 318 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 340 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 310 are discussed previously in connection with the first embodiment of this invention and will not be repeated.

Third Embodiment

[0081] As shown in FIGS. 8 and 9, a third embodiment of the valve 410 of the present invention comprises a valve body or housing 412, a support member 414, a flexible tubing 416, a seal 418, a ring member 420, a pair of clam shells 422a/422b, and a spring 424. The flexible tubing 416 may be connected to a catheter (not shown) and, together with the seal 418, defines an inner cavity 426. The inner cavity 426 forms an expandable fluid space of the valve 410. The clam shells 422a/422b desirably are substantially the same as the clam shells 220a/220b of FIG. 4 and are constructed to cause the fluid space within the valve 410 to increase upon insertion of a medical implement and to decrease upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as a syringe 428 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 9. The housing 412 is desirably similar to the housing 212 of FIG. 4.

[0082] The support member 414 has a hollow center 430 which supports the flexible tubing, and a proximal end 432 which encloses a distal end 434 of the housing 412. The support member 414 desirably locks onto the housing 412 via any method known to those of skill in the art. The proximal end 432 of the support member 414 supports the spring 424, which in turn supports the clam shells 422a/422b and seal 418.

[0083] The seal 418 is prepared from a resilient material that is flexible, inert, and impermeable to fluid, such as silicon. Referring to FIG. 8, the seal 418 is substantially similar to the seal 210 of FIG. 4, with a portion of the side wall 438 cut off near the shoulder 440 region. As a result, the side wall 438 of the seal 418 is substantially shorter than the side wall 254 of the seal 210 in FIG. 4. A distal end 442 of the side wall 254 is attached, preferably by adhesive, to a proximal end 444 of the flexible tubing 416. The distal end 442 abuts the ring member 420 which is disposed between the seal 418 and the clam shells 422a/422b and attached at its inner surface 446 to a portion of the tubing 416, desirably also by adhesive. Other suitable means of attachment may be used. The ring member 420 is desirably made of polycarbon.

[0084] The clam shells 422a/422b desirably form a sliding contact at their proximal ends with the ring member 420 for ease of assembly, but may alternatively be affixed to the ring member 420 by adhesive or similar means. The clam shells 422a/422b are desirably the same as the clam shells 220a/220b of FIG. 4, having tapered external surfaces 450a/450b to cooperate with the tapered side wall portion 452 of the

housing 412 for sliding and grooved internal surfaces 454a/454b that cooperate with one another to squeeze a portion of the tubing 416 to form a constricted portion 456.

[0085] The spring 424 is substantially the same as the spring 222 of FIG. 4 and serves the same function, being disposed between the distal ends of the clam shells 422a/422b and the proximal end 432 of the support member 414. In the decompressed state shown in FIG. 8, the spring 424 may be relaxed or in slight compression to exert a force on the seal 418 through the clam shells 422a/422b to keep the slit 466 in the seal cap 460 closed. During insertion of the syringe 428, the spring 424 is compressed and stores potential energy from the compression, as illustrated in FIG. 9. Upon withdrawal of the syringe 428, the spring 424 releases the potential energy and pushes the clam shells 422a/422b proximally to close the seal 418, as shown in FIG. 8. The spring 424 is preferably not attached or bonded to either the clam shells 422a/422b or the support member 414 for ease of assembly. The spring 424 can be a helical spring or any other suitable spring known to those with skill in the art.

[0086] FIG. 9 shows the compressed state of the valve 410 upon insertion of the syringe 428. In the compressed state, the syringe 428 is placed on the seal cap 460 inside the opening 464 of the housing 412 and the application of pressure on the syringe 428 creates pressure on the seal cap 460. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 460 away from the circular opening 464 and toward the distal end of the housing 412, which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 466 of the seal cap 460 to open. The resilient tubing 416 and the clam shells 422a/422b also move distally as the spring 424 deforms in compression, storing potential energy. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 428, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient.

[0087] The compression of the seal 418 shown in FIG. 9 generally causes a reduction in the volume of the inner cavity 426 formed by the seal 418 and tubing 416. However, because of an expansion of the constricted portion 456 defined by the clam shells 422a/422b an increase in fluid volume is created which is greater than the general reduction in fluid volume within the inner cavity 426, the valve 410 has a net gain in fluid volume. The increase in fluid volume results from the movement of the clam shells 422a/422b apart from one another during seal compression, facilitated by the tapered side wall 452 of the housing 412 and resiliency of the tubing 416.

[0088] FIG. 8 illustrates the valve 410 after withdrawal of the syringe 428. The seal 418 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 464, and the clam shells 422a/422b are pushed proximally toward the opening 464 by the spring 424. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 426 at the constricted portion 456 by the clam shells 422a/422b, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 410 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 410 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 418. This is further assisted by the seal 418, with the slit 466 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 460 is squeezed by upper conduit 470.

[0089] In addition, the valve 410 can be reused because the seal 418 can return reversibly to the decompressed state.

The seal surface 472 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 410 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention and will not be repeated.

Fourth Embodiment

[0090] A fourth embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in **FIGS. 10 and 11**. As illustrated therein, a valve 510, comprises a valve body or housing 512, a support member 514, a skirt 516, a retaining member 518, a seal 520, a pair of clam shells 522a/522b, and a resilient member 524. The valve 510 has several features that are the same or similar to those of the valve 310 of **FIGS. 8 and 9**, having a similar resilient member 524 and clam shells 522a/522b. The clam shells 522a/522b have internal surfaces 526a/526b that cooperate with one another to squeeze a portion of the seal side wall 528 to form a constricted portion 530 thereof.

[0091] The seal 510 is preferably made of silicon and has a seal cap 532 with a precut slit 534, shoulder 536, lower lip 538, and pressure responsive member 540 that are similar to the seal 210 of **FIG. 4**. These components serve the same function as those of the seal 210. The side wall 528 may be formed with ringed wall portions 258, as in the seal 210, but **FIG. 4** shows the side wall 528 that is generally circular cylindrical. The seal 520 defines an inner cavity 542 which forms an expandable fluid space inside the valve 510. During compression of the seal 520, the side wall 528 deforms outwardly into a circumferential cusp or bulge 544 in the unconstricted region between the clam shells 522a/522b and the support member 514. The side wall 528 returns to its decompressed shape upon decompression of the seal 520. The seal 520 is desirably relaxed longitudinally in the decompressed state (**FIG. 10**), and compressed longitudinally in the compressed state (**FIG. 11**). Alternatively, the seal 520 may be stretched longitudinally in tension by the resilient member 524 in the decompressed state and be relaxed or slightly compressed longitudinal in the compressed state.

[0092] Referring to **FIG. 10**, the skirt 516 is a bell-shaped skirt that is similar to the skirt 316 of **FIG. 8**. The skirt 516 creates a shield for an inner conduit 548 of the support member 514. The inner conduit 548 may be connected to a terminal end of a catheter (not shown) which has an open end that is generally inserted into a patient. The support member 514 serves as a support and attachment device for the seal 520 by holding the seal 520 in place inside the housing 512.

[0093] The support member 514 also serves as a support and attachment device for the skirt 516. Similar to the valve 310 of **FIG. 8**, the support member 514 shown in **FIG. 10** has an edge portion 550 which engages a ledge 552 of the skirt 516 in assembly. This attachment secures the skirt 516 in place. The skirt 516 desirably includes a Luer-Lock portion 554 that enables the valve 510 to be removably attached to, for example, a fluid line or catheter connected to a patient.

[0094] The retaining member 518 is desirably provided to secure the lower lip 538 of the seal 520 and support the resilient member 524. The retaining member 518 is held inside the housing 512 by the support member 514, and is provided for ease of assembling the valve 510. The retaining member 518 has an annular groove 556, and the support

member 514 has an annular groove 558. The annular grooves 556,558 form a locking mechanism to support and secure the seal 520 within the housing 512 by engaging the lower lip 538 snugly with the grooves 556,558. It is noted that a different embodiment may provide a unitary member which replaces the support member 514 and the retaining member 518. It is therefore contemplated that such an embodiment would fall within the scope of this invention.

[0095] **FIG. 11** illustrates compression and **FIG. 10** illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, a medical implement such as the syringe 562 partially shown in phantom is placed on the seal cap 532 inside the opening 564 of the housing 512, and the application of pressure on the syringe 562 creates pressure on the seal cap 532. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 532 away from the circular opening 564 and toward the lower portion of the housing 512, which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 534 to open. The side wall 528 deforms outwardly at the unconstricted region into a circumferential cusp 544, and the resilient member 524 deforms in an accordion-like manner, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 562, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient.

[0096] The compression of the seal 520 shown in **FIG. 11** generally causes a reduction in the fluid volume of the inner cavity 542 of the seal 520. The valve 510 has a net gain in volume of the inner cavity 542, however, because the general reduction in volume within the inner cavity 542 is less than the increase in volume within the constricted portion 530 as defined by the clam shells 522a/522b and of the cusp 544 at the unconstricted region of the seal 520.

[0097] **FIG. 10** illustrates the valve 510 after withdrawal of the syringe 562. The seal 520 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 564, and the clam shells 522a/522b are pushed back up toward the opening 564 by the resilient member 524. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 542 of the seal 520, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 510 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 510 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 520. This is further assisted by the seal 520, with the slit 534 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 532 is squeezed by the circular opening 564 at the top of the upper conduit 570.

[0098] In addition, the valve 510 can be reused because the seal 520 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 572 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 510 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Fifth Embodiment

[0099] **FIGS. 12 and 13** show a fifth embodiment valve 610 in accordance with the present invention, the valve 610 comprising a valve body or housing 612, a seal 614, a ring member 616, and a spring 618. The housing 612 is similar to the housing 212 of **FIG. 4**, with a circular opening 620, and a tapered side wall 622, but may have a straight side wall instead. The seal 614 is similar to the seal 318 of **FIG. 8**, having a substantially cylindrical side wall 624 and defining an inner cavity 626 which forms an expandable fluid space

inside the valve 610. The side wall 624 may have different and variable thickness (not shown). The components are dimensioned and configured to cause the fluid space to expand upon insertion of a medical implement and to contract upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as a syringe 630 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 13. The distal portion of the seal 614 is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown), and may be secured to the housing by means known to those with skill in the art, such as by the use of a support member (not shown) similar to the support member 214 shown in FIG. 15.

[0100] The ring member 616 is desirably an annular disk 616 made of a hard plastic and disposed between a shoulder 634 of the seal 614 and a proximal end 636 of the spring 618. The ring member 616 serves as a constraint for the seal 614 during compression and efficiently transfers the compressive force to the spring 618, assisting in the deformation of the seal 614. During decompression, the ring member 616 efficiently transfers the spring force to the seal cap 638 of the seal 614 to close the opening 620. Although the ring member 616 facilitates the deformation and reformation of the seal 614, it is not necessary for the seal 614 to work. In that case, the spring 618 will contact the seal cap 638 directly.

[0101] The spring 618 is substantially the same as the spring 222 of FIG. 4 and serves the same function, being disposed between the ring member 616 and a distal end 642 of the housing 612. In an alternative embodiment, the distal end 642 may be a separate component from the housing 612 for ease of assembly. In the decompressed state shown in FIG. 12, the spring 618 may be relaxed or be in slight compression to exert a force on the seal 614 through the ring member 616 to keep the seal 614 closed. During insertion of the syringe 630, the spring 618 is compressed and stores potential energy from the compression, as illustrated in FIG. 13. Upon withdrawal of the syringe 630, the spring 618 releases the potential energy and pushes the ring member 616 to close the seal 616 as shown in FIG. 12. The spring 618 is preferably not fixed with either the ring member 616 or the distal end 642 of the housing 612 for ease of assembly. The spring 618 can be a helical spring or any other suitable spring known to those with skill in the art.

[0102] The side wall 624 of the seal 614 is constrained by the ring member 616 and housing 612, and is substantially relaxed in the decompressed state. During compression of the seal 614, the side wall 624 bulges in the unconstrained region between the ring member 616 and the distal end 642 of the housing 612, causing an increase in the fluid space within the valve 610. The side wall 624 returns to its decompressed shape upon decompression of the seal 614. Alternatively, the side wall 624 may be stretched in tension by the spring 618 in the decompressed state and goes through a relaxed position before deforming under compression to its bulged condition.

[0103] FIG. 13 illustrates compression and FIG. 12 illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe 630 is placed on the seal cap 638 inside the opening 620 of the housing and the application of pressure on the syringe 630 creates pressure on the seal cap 638. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 638 and the ring member 616 away from the circular opening 620 and toward the lower portion of the housing 612 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the pre-cut slit 646 of

the seal cap 638 to open. The side wall 624 deforms outwardly and bulges at the unconstricted region, as the spring 618 is compressed, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 630, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. The compression of the seal 614 shown in FIG. 13 results in a net gain in volume of the inner cavity.

[0104] FIG. 12 illustrates the valve 610 after withdrawal of the syringe 630. The seal 614 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 620, and the ring member 616 is pushed back up toward the opening 620 as the spring 618 releases its potential energy. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 626 of the seal 614, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 610 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 610 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 614. This is further assisted by the seal 614 with the slit 646 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 638 is squeezed by the circular opening 620 at the top of the upper conduit 650 of the housing 612.

[0105] In addition, the valve 610 can be reused because the seal 614 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 652 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 610 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Sixth Embodiment

[0106] A sixth embodiment of a valve 710 is illustrated in FIGS. 14 and 15. The valve 710 comprises a valve body or housing 712 and a seal 714. The housing 712 has an upper conduit 716 near a proximal end with a circular opening 718 that is preferably adapted to receive a medical implement. A side wall portion 720 is protruded to facilitate deformation of the seal 714. A distal end 724 of the housing 712 forms a lower passage 726 (partially shown) which supports and constrains a distal portion 728 of the seal 714, and is connected, for example, to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). Alternatively, a support member (not shown) may be used to detachably lock onto the housing 712 and support the seal 714, such as those shown in FIG. 4 (214) or FIG. 12 (514).

[0107] The seal 714 is generally similar to the seal 614 of FIGS. 12 and 13, and has a substantially cylindrical side wall 721, although the side wall 732 may have a slight bulge 733 as shown in FIG. 14. It defines an inner cavity 734 which forms an expandable fluid space inside the valve 710. In the decompressed state, the seal 714 is constrained by the upper conduit 716 and lower passage 726 of the housing 712, and is substantially relaxed in the decompressed state. The components are dimensioned and configured to cause the fluid space to expand or increase upon insertion of the medical implement and to contract or decrease upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as the syringe 730 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 15. During compression of the seal 714, the side wall 732 bulge in the unconstrained region between the upper conduit 716 and lower passage 726 and the bulge 733 is substantially round. The side wall 732 return to its decompressed shape upon decompression of the seal 714.

[0108] FIG. 15 illustrates compression and FIG. 14 illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the com-

pressed state, the syringe 730 is placed on the seal cap 742 of the seal 714 inside the opening 718 of the housing 712 and the application of pressure on the syringe 730 creates pressure on the seal cap 742. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 742 away from the circular opening 718 and toward the protruded portion 720 of the housing 712 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 746 of the seal cap 742 to open. The side wall 732 deforms outwardly and bulges at the unconstricted region 738, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 730, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. The compression of the seal 714 shown in FIG. 15 generates a net gain in volume of the inner cavity.

[0109] FIG. 14 illustrates the valve 710 after withdrawal of the syringe 730. The seal 714 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 718. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 734 of the seal, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 710 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 710 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 714. This is further assisted by the seal 714 with the slit 746 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 742 is squeezed by the circular opening 718 at the top of the upper conduit 716.

[0110] In addition, the valve 710 can be reused because the seal 710 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 748 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 710 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Seventh Embodiment

[0111] FIGS. 16 and 17 illustrate a valve 710 in accordance with a seventh embodiment of the present invention, the valve 756 comprising a valve body or housing 758 and a seal 760 that are substantially the same as the housing 712 and seal 714 of FIGS. 14 and 15, with a distal portion 762 of the seal 760 connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). The seal 760, however, is configured to deform upon compression into a diamond-shaped cusp 764 instead of a round bulge 738 as illustrated in FIGS. 14 and 15. This type of construction may facilitate deformation and reformation of the seal 760, and may be more easily formed. The valve activation of this embodiment is virtually identical to that in FIGS. 14 and 15, except for the deformed shape of the seal side wall 770. It is contemplated, therefore, that a seal that may deform into a variety of shapes other than round and diamond shapes to achieve positive flow may be employed, as long as the it is dimensioned and configured to cause the fluid space of the valve to expand upon insertion of a medical implement and to contract upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as the syringe 774 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 28.

Eighth Embodiment

[0112] As illustrated in FIGS. 18 and 19, an eighth embodiment valve 810 of the present invention is similar to the embodiments shown in FIGS. 14-17. The valve 810 also includes a housing 812 having an internal cavity 814 with an upper conduit 816, and a seal 818 disposed inside the internal cavity 814 and having an inner cavity 820 that

defines a fluid space. The housing 812 has a distal end 824 which supports a side wall 826 of the seal 818. A distal portion 828 of the seal 818 is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). The pressure at the inner cavity 820 of the seal 818 is P1. Between the housing 812 and the seal 818 is an enclosed pressure chamber 832 at pressure P2. The valve activation utilizes the pressure difference between P2 in the pressure chamber 832 and P1 in the inner cavity 820 of the seal 818.

[0113] Upon insertion of a medical implement such as a syringe 836 shown in phantom in FIG. 19, the pressure at the inner cavity 820 of the seal 818 increases from P1 to P3 and the fluid space inside the seal 818 expands from the decompressed state of FIG. 18. The expansion of the fluid space results primarily from a difference in pressure between P3 and P2. This valve 810 is particularly advantageous in the case where the side wall 826 of the seal 818 deforms without storing substantial potential energy. For instance, the side wall 826 of the seal 818 may deform without substantial resistance or resiliency such as a membrane, or the seal is not constrained longitudinally by the distal portion 824 of the housing 812 and may slide in and out of the internal cavity 814 of the housing 812 through the distal end 824.

[0114] FIG. 19 illustrates compression and FIG. 18 illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe 836 is placed on the seal cap 838 of the seal 818 inside the opening 840 of the housing 812 and the application of pressure on the syringe creates pressure on the seal cap 838. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 838 away from the circular opening 840 and toward the lower portion of the housing 812 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 844 of the seal cap 838 to open. The entry of the fluid causes the pressure at the inner cavity 814 of the seal 812 to increase to P3. As a result, the side wall 826 deforms outwardly and bulges at the unconstricted region 848. Potential energy is stored in the change in pressure differential between the inner cavity 820 and the pressure chamber 832. The side wall 826 of the seal 818 need not deform and store energy, but may do so. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 836, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. The compression of the seal 818 shown in FIG. 19 causes a net gain or increase in fluid volume within the inner cavity.

[0115] FIG. 18 illustrates the valve 810 after withdrawal of the syringe 836. The seal 818 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 840, and the pressure in the inner cavity 820 returns to P1 and releases the potential energy. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 820 of the seal 818, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 810 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 810 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 818. This is further assisted by the seal 818 with the slit 844 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 838 is squeezed by the circular opening 840 at the top of the upper conduit 816.

[0116] In addition, the valve 810 can be reused because the seal 818 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 854 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 810 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Ninth Embodiment

[0117] A ninth embodiment of a valve **910** comprising a housing **912**, a support member **914**, a skirt **916**, a seal **918**, and a scissor-like cross member **920**, is depicted in **FIGS. 20 and 21**. The housing **912** has an upper conduit **924** with a circular opening **926**. The support member **914** has an inner conduit **928** which is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). The seal **918** has a side wall **930** desirably formed of alternating wall portions **932** and defines an inner cavity **934** which forms an expandable fluid space inside the valve **910**. The cross member **920** is dimensioned and configured to assist in causing the fluid space to expand upon insertion of a medical implement and to contract upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as the syringe **936** partially shown in phantom in **FIG. 21**.

[0118] The cross member **920** has two longitudinal members **940** attached together which rotates with respect to one another, and is desirably made of a hard material such as a hard plastic. The cross member **920** is disposed at a constricted portion **942** of the seal **918** within the inner cavity **934** with the longitudinal members **940** preferably substantially disposed vertically. The ends **944** of the longitudinal members **940** are desirably attached to the side wall **930** as shown in **FIG. 20**. The longitudinal members **940** rotate to a substantially horizontal orientation upon compression by the insertion of the syringe **936** as shown in **FIG. 21**. This rotation is referred to as the deformation of the cross member **920**. The longitudinal members **940** may be attached to rotate freely with respect to one another. Alternatively, the longitudinal members **940** may be spring-loaded or attached such that they rotate under a rotational force but reform to their relaxed position upon release of the force. Upon withdrawal of the syringe **936** as shown in **FIG. 20**, the longitudinal members **940** return to the substantially vertical positions, referred to as the reformation of the cross member **920**. The longitudinal members **940** are desirably longitudinal plates **940** with sufficient width to expand the constricted portion **942** of the seal **918** in the substantially horizontal position but not so wide that they impede flow therethrough. Alternatively, they may contain holes (not shown) through which fluid can pass.

[0119] **FIG. 21** illustrates compression and **FIG. 20** illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe **926** is placed on the seal cap **950** of the seal **918** inside the opening **926** of the housing **912** and the application of pressure on the syringe **936** creates pressure on the seal cap **950**. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap **950** away from the circular opening **926** and toward the lower portion of the housing **912** which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit **952** of seal cap **950** to open. The side wall **930** of the seal **918** deforms in an accordion-like manner, and the cross member **920** deforms and opens up the constricted portion **922** of the seal **918**, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe **936**, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. The compression of the seal **918** and deformation of the cross **920** shown in **FIG. 21** generally causes a contraction of the volume of the inner cavity **934** of the seal **918**. The valve **910** has a net gain in volume of the inner cavity **934**, however, because the general contraction of the inner cavity **934** is less than by the expansion of the constricted portion **942** pushed apart by the

cross member **920**. The expansion results from the movement of the longitudinal members **940** of the cross member **920** during compression.

[0120] **FIG. 20** illustrates the valve **910** after withdrawal of the syringe **936**. The seal **918** returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening **926**, and the cross member **920** reforms to allow the constricted region **942** of the seal **918** to narrow. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity **934** at the constricted portion **942**, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve **910** through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve **910** advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal **918**. This is further assisted by the seal **918** with the slit **952** remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap **950** is squeezed by the circular opening **926** at the top of the upper conduit **924**.

[0121] In addition, the valve **910** can be reused because the seal **918** can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface **960** is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve **910** are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Tenth Embodiment

[0122] **FIGS. 22 and 23** illustrate a valve **1010** in accordance with a tenth embodiment of the present invention, the valve **1010** comprising a valve body or housing **1012**, a support member **1014** (partially shown), a seal **1016**, a ring member **1018**, a resilient reel **1020**, and a scissor-like cross member **1022**. The support member **1014** has an inner conduit (not shown) which is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). The seal **1016** has a seal cap **1028** with slit **1030**, shoulder **1032**, and pressure responsive member **1034**.

[0123] The ring member **1018** forms a sliding contact with a distal end **1036** of the seal **1016** and is preferably made from a hard plastic. The ring member **1018** desirably has a shoulder **1038** which is constrained by a ledge **1040** of the housing **1012** in the upward direction. The distal end of the ring member **1018** contacts an upper flange **1044** of the resilient reel **1020** and facilitates transfer of the compressive force due to insertion of a medical implement to cause deformation of the reel **1020**. The reel **1020** is made from a material that is flexible, inert, and impermeable to fluid, such as silicon. It has a lower flange **1046** that is supported and secured by the support member **1014** and a central body portion **1048** that is substantially cylindrical. The seal **1016**, ring member **1018**, and resilient reel **1020** define an inner cavity **1050** which forms an expandable fluid space inside the valve **1010**.

[0124] The cross member **1022** is substantially the same of the cross member **920** of **FIGS. 20 and 21** and is dimensioned and configured to assist in causing the fluid space to increase upon insertion of a medical implement and to decrease upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as the syringe **1054** partially shown in phantom in **FIG. 23**. The cross member **1022** has two longitudinal members **1056** rotatably attached together. The cross member **1022** is disposed adjacent the central body portion **1048** of the reel **1020** within the inner cavity **1050** with the longitudinal members **1056** preferably pointed toward the vertical direction and desirably attached to the central body portion **1048** at its four ends **1058** as shown in **FIG. 22**. The longitudinal

members **1056** rotate to a substantially horizontal orientation upon compression by the insertion of the syringe **1054** as shown in **FIG. 23**. This rotation is referred to as the deformation of the cross member **1022**. The longitudinal members **1050** may be attached to rotate freely with respect to one another. Alternatively, the longitudinal members **1056** may be spring-loaded or attached such that they rotate under a rotational force but reform to their relaxed position upon release of the force. Upon withdrawal of the syringe **1056** as shown in **FIG. 22**, the longitudinal members **1056** return to the substantially vertical positions, referred to as the reformation of the cross member **1022**. The longitudinal members **1026** are desirably longitudinal plates **1056** with sufficient width to open up the central body portion **1048** of the reel **1020** in the substantially horizontal position but not so wide that they impede flow therethrough. Alternatively, they may contain holes (not shown) through which fluid can pass.

[0125] **FIG. 23** illustrates compression and **FIG. 22** illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe **1054** is placed on the seal cap **1028** inside the opening **1062** of the housing **1012** and the application of pressure on the syringe **1054** creates pressure on the seal cap **1028**. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap **1028** away from the circular opening **1062** and toward the lower portion of the housing **1012** which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit **1030** to open. The ring member **1018** moves toward the support member **1014** and compresses the resilient reel **1020**. The upper flange **1044** of the resilient reel **1020** is pushed by the ring member **1018** toward the lower flange **1046**. The central body portion **1048** bulges outwardly as the cross member **1022** deforms, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe **1054**, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient.

[0126] The compression of the seal **1016** and deformation of the cross **1022** shown in **FIG. 23** generally causes a reduction in the volume of the inner cavity of the seal **1016**. The valve **1010** has a net gain in volume of the inner cavity **1050**, however, because the expansion of the central body portion **1048** of the flexible reel **120** causes an increase in fluid volume which reduction resulting in is greater than the general contraction of the inner cavity **1050**. The expansion results from the movement of the longitudinal members **1056** of the cross member **1022** to open up the central body portion **1048** of the resilient reel **1020** during compression.

[0127] **FIG. 22** illustrates the valve **1010** after withdrawal of the syringe **1054**. The seal **1016** returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening **1062**, and the cross member **1022** reforms to allow the central body region **1048** of the resilient reel **1022** to narrow. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity **1050** at the central body portion **1048**, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve **1010** through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve **1010** advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal **1016**. This is further assisted by the seal **1016** with the slit **1030** remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap **1028** is squeezed by the circular opening **1062** at the top of the upper conduit **1066** of the housing.

[0128] In addition, the valve **1010** can be reused because the seal **1016** can return reversibly in the decompressed

state. The seal surface **1068** is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve **1010** are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Eleventh Embodiment

[0129] An eleventh embodiment of a valve **1110** in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in **FIGS. 24 and 25**, and comprises a valve body or housing **1112** and a seal **1114**. The housing **1112** has an upper conduit **1116** near a proximal end with a circular opening **1118** that is preferably adapted to receive a medical implement such as a syringe **1120** partially shown in phantom in **FIG. 25**. The housing **1112** has a lower conduit **1124** (partially shown) near a distal end which is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). Disposed between the upper conduit **1116** and lower conduit **1124** are protruded right and left side walls **1126a, 1126b** connected to resilient ribbed portions **1128a, 1128b** which allow the side walls **1126a, 1126b** to be stretched outwardly and reform inwardly in a substantially horizontal direction. Aside from the resilient ribbed portions **1128a, 1128b**, the rest of the housing **1112** is desirably made of a firm material such as a hard plastic.

[0130] The seal **1114** is generally similar to the seal **318** of **FIG. 6** with a similar shoulder **1132**, seal cap **1134**, and pressure responsive element **1136**. The cylindrical side wall **350** of **FIG. 6**, however, is replaced with a spreader **1140**, which includes two legs **1142a, 1142b** that extend from the shoulder **1132** outwardly at distal ends **1144a, 1144b** that bear against the protruded right and left side walls **1126a, 1126b**, as best seen in **FIG. 24**. The distal end **1144a** may be attached to the protruded side wall **1126a**, and the distal end **1144b** may be attached to the protruded side wall **1126b**, by adhesives or other available means. An inner cavity **1150** is formed by the seal **1114** and a distal portion **1152** of the housing **1112**, and defines a fluid space of the valve **1110**. During compression of the seal **1114**, the spreader **1140** extends further outwardly and pushes the protruded side walls **1126a, 1126b** outwardly. The seal **1114** and housing **1112** are configured and dimensioned to assist in causing the fluid space to expand upon insertion of the medical implement **1120** and to contract upon withdrawal of the medical implement **1120**.

[0131] **FIG. 25** illustrates compression and **FIG. 24** illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe **1120** is placed on the seal cap **1134** inside the opening **1118** of the housing **1112** and the application of pressure on the syringe **1120** creates pressure on the seal cap **1134**. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap **1134** away from the circular opening **1118** and toward the lower portion of the housing **1112** which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit **1156** of the seal cap **1134** to open. The spreader **1140** extends outwardly, stretching the resilient ribbed portions **1128a, 1128b** and pushing the protruded right and left side walls **1126a, 1126b** of the housing **1112** outwardly, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe **1120**, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. The compression of the seal **1114** and deformation of the spreader **1140** shown in **FIG. 36** results in a net gain in volume of the inner cavity **1150**.

[0132] **FIG. 24** illustrates the valve **1110** after withdrawal of the syringe **1120**. The seal **1114** returns to its decom-

pressed state and essentially fills the opening 1118, and the spreader 1140 and resilient ribbed portions 1128a, 1128b reform to allow the protruded right and left side walls 1126a, 1126b to move inwardly. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 1150, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 1110 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 1110 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 1114. This is further assisted by the seal 14 with the slit 1156 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 1134 is squeezed by the circular opening 1156 at the top of the upper conduit 1116.

[0133] In addition, the valve 1110 can be reused because the seal 1114 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 1160 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 1110 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Twelfth Embodiment

[0134] A twelfth embodiment valve 1210 is illustrated in FIGS. 26 and 27, and comprises a valve body or housing 1212, a support member 1214 (partially shown), a seal 1216, a ring member 1218, and a resilient reel 1220. The housing 1212, support member 1214, and ring member 1218 are substantially the same as those shown in FIGS. 22 and 23. The housing 1212 has an upper conduit 1224 with a circular opening 1226. The support member 1214 has an inner conduit (not shown) which is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). The distal end 1228 of the ring member 1218 contacts an upper flange 1232 of the resilient reel 1220 and facilitates transfer of the compressive force due to insertion of a medical implement such as a syringe to cause deformation of the reel 1220. The reel 1220 further includes a central body portion 1234 and a lower flange 1236 that is desirably supported and secured by the support member 1214.

[0135] The seal 1216 is similar to the seal 1114 of FIGS. 24 and 25, and has a similar seal cap 1240 with slit 1242, shoulder 1244, and pressure responsive member 1246. The seal 1246 has a spreader 1250 that extends from the shoulder 1244 outwardly and forms a circular distal ring 1252 that bears against the central body portion 1234 of the resilient reel 1220, as best seen in FIG. 26. The distal ring 1252 may be attached to the central body portion 1234 by adhesives or other available means. An inner cavity 1254 is formed by the seal 1216 and a distal portion 1256 of the resilient reel, and defines a fluid space of the valve 1210. During compression of the seal 1216, the spreader 1250 extends further outwardly and pushes the central body portion 1234 of the resilient reel 1220 outwardly. The seal 1216 and resilient reel 1220 are configured and dimensioned to assist in causing the fluid space to increase upon insertion of a medical implement and to decrease upon withdrawal of the medical implement such as the syringe 1260 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 27.

[0136] FIG. 27 illustrates compression and FIG. 26 illustrates decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe 1260 is placed on the seal cap 1240 inside the opening 1226 of the housing 1212 and the application of pressure on the syringe 1260 creates pressure on the seal cap 1240. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 1240 away from the circular opening 1226 and toward

the lower portion of the housing 1212 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 1242 to open. The ring member 1218 moves toward the support member 1214 and compresses the resilient reel 1220. The upper flange 1232 of the resilient reel 1220 is pushed by the ring member 1214 toward the lower flange 1236. The central body portion 1234 bulges outwardly as the spreader 1250 deforms and pushes the central body portion 1234 outwardly, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 1260, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient.

[0137] The compression of the seal 1216 and deformation of the spreader 1250 and reel 1220 shown in FIG. 27 causes an increase in volume of the inner cavity 1254 because of the expansion of the central body portion 1234 of the flexible reel 1220. The expansion results from the movement of the spreaders 1250 to open up the central body portion 1234 of the resilient reel 1220 during compression.

[0138] FIG. 26 illustrates the valve 1210 after withdrawal of the syringe 1260. The seal 1216 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 1226, and the spreader 1250 reforms to allow the central body region 1234 of the resilient reel 1220 to narrow. Because of the contraction of the inner cavity 1254 at the central body portion 1234, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 1210 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 1210 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 1216. This is further assisted by the seal 1216 with the slit 1242 remaining open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 1240 is squeezed by the circular opening 1226 at the top of the upper conduit 1224.

[0139] In addition, the valve 1210 can be reused because the seal 1216 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 1266 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 1210 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Thirteenth Embodiment

[0140] A thirteenth embodiment valve 1310 in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 28 and 29. The valve 1310 comprises a body or housing 1312, a support member 1314 (partially shown), an upper seal 1316, and a lower seal 1318. The housing 1312 has an upper conduit 1322 near a proximal end with a circular opening 1324 that is preferably adapted to receive a medical implement such as a syringe 1326 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 40. The body 1312 has an upper side wall 1330 distal to the upper conduit 1322 that is desirably circular in cross section with a diameter larger than the diameter of the circular opening 1324. The body 1312 has a lower side wall 1332 distal to the upper side wall 1330 with a diameter larger than the diameter of the upper side wall 1330. A middle conduit 1338 is advantageously formed between the upper side wall 1330 and lower side wall 1332. The upper side wall 1330 is advantageously tapered from the upper conduit 1322 to the middle conduit 1338 and the lower side wall 1332 is advantageously tapered from the middle conduit 1338 to a distal end 1340 of the housing 1312. The middle conduit 1338 has a diameter larger than the diameter of the upper conduit 1322 and smaller than the diameter of the distal end 1340 of the housing 1312.

[0141] The support member 1314 has at its distal end an inner conduit (not shown) which may be connected to a terminal of a catheter (not shown). The support member 1314 serves as a support and attachment device for the upper and lower seals 1316, 1318 by holding the seals 1316, 1318 in place inside the internal cavity 1346 of the housing 1312.

[0142] The upper and lower seals 1316, 1318 are prepared from a resilient material that is flexible, inert, and impermeable to fluid, such as silicon. The upper seal 1316 has a seal cap 1350 with a generally flat top surface 1352, a shoulder 1354, a side wall 1356, and a base 1358. The side wall 1356 advantageously is comprised of ringed wall portions 1360 which deform in an accordion-like fashion and assist in the reformation of the seal 1316 to enclose the housing opening 1324 upon withdrawal of the syringe 1326. During compression of the upper seal 1316, the diameter of the ringed wall portions 1360 expand outwardly in the radial direction. The interior of the upper seal 1316 is hollow to provide an upper inner cavity 1362, as best seen in FIG. 28. The shoulder 1354 engages an upper ledge 1366 provided in the upper conduit 1322 of the housing 1312 such that the upper ledge 1366 confines the movement of the shoulder 1354 toward the opening 1324 to prevent the upper seal 1316 from being blown through the opening 1324 under high pressure in the upper inner cavity 1362 of the seal 1316.

[0143] The seal cap 1350 of the upper seal 1316 reseals in the valve 1310 at the opening 1324 with the top surface 1352 of the seal 1316 flush with or above the opening 1324 upon removal of the medical implement 1326. The seal cap 1350 substantially fills the opening 1324 in the top of the upper conduit 1322. It is preferred the top surface 1352 be exposed after assembly so that it may be swabbed with alcohol or other disinfectant. The seal cap 1350 of the upper seal 1316 desirably has a unique shape with a precut slit 1370 such that the seal cap 1350 is squeezed shut by the opening 1324 when assembled and the slit 1370 opens automatically during compression. The seal 1316 desirably also includes a pressure responsive member 1372 to further assist in creating a fluid-tight seal in the decompressed state.

[0144] As shown in FIGS. 28 and 29, the lower seal 1318 desirably is generally similar to the upper seal 1316. The lower seal has a similar seal cap 1380 with a generally flat top surface 1382, a shoulder 1384, and a side wall 1386. The side wall 1386 defines a lower inner cavity 1390 and may include similar ringed wall portions (not shown). The seal cap 1380 is disposed at the middle conduit 1338 at the decompressed state and reseals the lower inner cavity 1390 at the middle conduit 1338 upon removal of the medical implement 1326. The lower inner cavity 1390 forms a fluid space of the valve 1310, being in fluid communication through the lower conduit (not shown) to, e.g., a catheter (not shown). The valve components are configured and dimensioned to assist in causing the fluid space to increase upon insertion of the medical implement 1326 and to decrease upon withdrawal of the medical implement 1326.

[0145] The seal cap 1380 advantageously provides a fluid tight seal, having a shape and a precut slit 1394 similar to those of the upper seal 1316. The lower seal 1318 also includes desirably a pressure responsive member 1396 similar to the pressure responsive member 1372 of the upper seal 1316. The components of the lower seal 1318 are generally larger than those of the upper seal 1316 because of the geometry of the valve housing 1312.

[0146] To illustrate valve activation, FIG. 29 shows the compressed state of the valve 1310 upon insertion of the syringe 1326. The syringe 1326 is placed on the upper seal cap 1350 inside the opening 1324 of the housing 1212. The application of pressure on the syringe 1326 creates pressure on the seal cap 1350, and the resulting downward pressure compresses the upper seal 1316. This pushes the seal cap 1350 away from the circular opening 1324 and toward the middle conduit 1338 at a region with a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 1370 to open. The downward movement is facilitated by the compression of the ringed wall portions 1360 of the side wall 1356 of the upper seal 1316. The downward force is transferred to the lower seal 1318 through the base 1358 of the upper seal 1316 which cooperates with the seal cap 1380 of the lower seal 1318. The application of the pressure pushes the lower seal cap 1380 away from the middle conduit 1338 and toward the lower portion of the housing 1312 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 1394 to open. Fluid is now able to flow into the syringe 1326, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. FIG. 29 shows the valve 1310 opened by insertion of the syringe 1326 into the opening 1324.

[0147] In the compressed state shown in FIG. 29, the fluid space generally contract under pressure from the decompressed state shown in FIG. 28. Upon removal of the syringe 1326 from the upper conduit 1322, as shown in FIG. 28, the upper and lower seals 1316, 1318 are free to move toward their decompressed states. The movement normally would cause a general expansion of the fluid space. However, because of the fluid communication between the upper inner cavity 1362 and lower inner cavity 1390, and the closing of the precut slit 1394 of the lower seal 1318 upon compression, a decrease in volume results in the lower inner cavity 1390 of the valve 1310. The decrease in the fluid space advantageously generates a positive flow from the valve 1310 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown) to eliminate dead space. Advantageously, any dead space within the upper inner cavity 1362 is also minimized since, as the syringe 1326 is withdrawn, the slit 1370 remains open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 1350 is squeezed by the circular opening 1324 at the top of the upper conduit 1322. The elimination of backflash is particularly advantageous in the case where the valve 1310 is connected through a catheter to a patient, because it prevents the introduction of blood into the catheter.

[0148] As the upper seals 1316 is free to move to its decompressed state, it essentially fills the circular opening 1324. The ability of the upper seal 1316 to return reversibly to its decompressed state, together with the resiliency of the lower seal 1318, permits the reuse of the valve 1310. Following disconnection, and before reuse, the surface 1352 of the seal cap 1316 is essentially flush with the opening 1324 of the housing 1312. Thus, this flush surface 1352 can advantageously be sterilized with alcohol or other surface decontaminating substances. A cover cap (not shown) can further be used to fit over the upper conduit to protect the surface 1352 of the seal cap 1350.

Fourteenth Embodiment

[0149] A fourteenth embodiment of a valve 1410 of the present invention is illustrated in FIGS. 30 and 32, and

comprises a valve body or housing 1412, a seal 1414, a piston 1416, and a spring 1418. The housing 1412 has an upper conduit 1420 near a proximal end with a circular opening 1422 that is preferably adapted to receive a medical implement such as a syringe 1423 partially shown in phantom in FIG. 30. The housing 1412 has a side conduit 1424 which is connected to a fluid line such as a catheter (not shown). Disposed in a lower chamber 1426 of the housing 1412 is the spring 1418 supporting the piston 1416 which bears against a distal end 1430 of the seal 1414 disposed in an upper chamber 1432 of the housing 1412. The lower chamber 1426 of the housing 1412 advantageously includes an orifice 1434 for venting the air therein to facilitate movement of the spring 1418. The upper chamber 1432 and lower chamber 1426 expand and contract according to the movement of the piston 1416 under pressure from the seal 1414 and the spring 1418. The housing 1412 advantageously includes a side aperture 1438 additional fluid to be transferred to the patient through the upper chamber 1432 and side conduit 1424 when necessary.

[0150] The seal 1414 has seal cap 1442 with precut slit 1444, a shoulder 1446, and a pressure responsive member 1448. The seal has a side wall 1450 which defines an inner cavity 1452 and has the distal end 1430 that cooperates with the piston 1416 for efficient transfer of pressure between them. Near the distal end 1430 of the seal 1414 is desirably a transverse fluid passage 1456 for fluid communication between the seal 1414 and the upper chamber 1432. Although FIGS. 30 and 32 illustrate that the transverse fluid passage 1456 also facilitates fluid flow between the side aperture 1438 and the side conduit 1424, it need not do so if fluid can flow around the seal 1414 in the upper chamber 1432. The upper chamber 1432 and the inner cavity 1450 of the seal 1414 forms the fluid space of the valve 1410.

[0151] FIG. 31 illustrates compression and FIG. 30 illustrated decompression during valve activation. In the compressed state, the syringe 1423 is placed on the seal cap 1442 inside the opening 1422 of the housing 1412 and the application of pressure on the syringe 1423 creates pressure on the seal cap 1442. The downward pressure pushes the seal cap 1442 away from the circular opening 1422 and toward the lower portion of the housing 1412 which has a larger inner diameter, thereby allowing the precut slit 1444 to open. The side wall 1450 moves further into the upper chamber 1432 and pushes the piston 1416 downward against the spring 1418, which is compressed, storing potential energy of the compression. Fluid is able to flow into the syringe 1423, or vice versa, depending on whether fluid is to be withdrawn from the patient or medication injected into the patient. The compression of the seal 1414 shown in FIG. 42 generates a net gain or increase in volume of the fluid space of the valve 1410.

[0152] FIG. 30 illustrates the valve 1410 after withdrawal of the syringe 1423. The seal 1414 returns to its decompressed state and essentially fills the opening 1422, and the piston 1416 moves back to its decompressed position as the spring 1418 releases its potential energy. Because of the contraction of the upper chamber 1432 of the housing 1412, there is a net loss in fluid space, resulting in a positive flow from the valve 1410 through, e.g., a catheter tip (not shown). The positive-flow valve 1410 advantageously eliminates any dead space during decompression of the seal 1414. This is further assisted by the seal 1414 with the slit 1444 remaining

open until the very end, i.e., until the seal cap 1442 is squeezed by the circular opening 1422 at the top of the upper conduit 1420.

[0153] In addition, the valve 1410 can be reused because the seal 1414 can return reversibly in the decompressed state. The seal surface 1460 is also swabbable for sterility. Other features of the valve 1410 are discussed previously in connection with the earlier embodiments of this invention.

Additional Embodiments

[0154] Additional embodiments of the present invention are contemplated without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. For instance, the volume inside a straight tubing contracts when the tube is bent. Thus, one valve embodiment may have a fluid space inside a straight tubing which bends upon insertion of a medical implement and reforms upon withdrawal of the medical implement, thereby effecting positive flow.

[0155] In addition, many of the ringed side wall of the seals (such as the portions 1360 of the seal 1316 of FIG. 28) can be replaced by circular tires 1580 stacked in series one on top of an adjacent larger-diameter lower tire, as illustrated in FIG. 32. The circular tires 1580 are preferably solid throughout the diameter of the cross-section thereof. Like the ringed side wall portions 1360, these circular tires 1580 will deform and reform upon, respectively, compression and decompression of the seal.

CONCLUSION

[0156] In the embodiments described above, the fluid space inside the valve increases upon insertion of a medical implement in the compressed state and decreases upon withdrawal of the medical implement in the decompressed state. In some embodiments, the structure defining the fluid space is substantially relaxed and does not store substantial amount of potential energy. Insertion of the medical implement causes a change in the structure that allows it to store potential energy. The potential energy is released upon withdrawal of the medical implement and the structure returns to a substantially relaxed condition. In other embodiments, at least some components of the structure defining the fluid space stores potential energy under strain or deformation. Upon insertion of a medical implement in the compressed state, the potential energy in those components is released and is stored in other components of the structure or in another form. The stored potential energy in the compressed state is released when the medical implement is removed, and the original potential energy is restored in the structure.

[0157] The above presents a description of the best mode contemplated of carrying out the present invention, and of the manner and process of using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains to make and use this invention. This invention is, however, susceptible to modifications and alternate constructions from that discussed above which are fully equivalent. In particular, many of the features of the co-pending applications, serial nos. and can be incorporated into the present invention, and these applications are incorporated herein by reference. The embodiments described are meant to be illustrative and not exhaustive. Consequently, it is not the intention to limit this invention to the particular

embodiments disclosed. On the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications and alternate constructions coming within the spirit and scope of the invention as generally expressed by the following claims, which particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A medical connector for controlling a flow of fluid between first and second medical implements, the medical connector comprising:

a housing comprising a first end, a second end, and an interior cavity, the first end including a first opening adapted to snugly receive an ANSI-standard luer of the first medical implement, and the interior cavity comprising a region near the first end with a first cross-sectional area smaller than a second cross-sectional area in a region closer to the second end of the housing than the first cross-sectional area, the second end of the housing including an external conduit with a second opening and a skirt portion with an internal screw thread adapted to be removably connected to the second medical implement, and the exterior surface of the housing having a first portion near the first end defining a first external cross-sectional width and a second portion in the distal direction from the first portion defining a second external cross-sectional width larger than the first external cross-sectional width wherein the second portion is in the proximal direction from the skirt portion of the second end;

a region on the housing near the first end including an exterior surface with a mounting structure adapted to be rotatably attached to a screw thread on an internal surface of the first medical implement, the exterior surface of the housing also including a shoulder portion wider in diameter than the mounting structure, the shoulder portion configured to halt the advancement of the first medical implement along the mounting structure;

a flexible member comprising a first opening in the region of the first end of the housing and a second opening in the region of the second end of the housing, and a fluid passageway within the flexible member; and

an interior conduit having a fluid passageway and positioned within the interior cavity, the conduit in fluid communication with the fluid passageway of the flexible member, and a portion of the flexible member overlapping the interior conduit;

wherein the flexible member is configured to move from a substantially closed position to a substantially open position upon insertion of the luer of the first medical implement into the first opening of the housing, the flexible member overlaps the interior conduit to a greater extent in the substantially open position than in the substantially closed position, and the flexible member is configured to move from the substantially open position to the substantially closed position upon withdrawal of the luer of the first medical implement from the first opening of the housing, the volume of the fluid passageway within the flexible member being larger in the substantially open position than in the substantially closed position so that fluid contained within the flexible member upon the withdrawal of the luer of the first medical implement is forced toward the second end of the housing, the fluid passageway of the flexible member and the interior conduit cooperating to form a substantially non-tortuous fluid passageway through the valve when the flexible member is in the substantially open position.

2. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein an end of the flexible member closest to the first end of the housing is displaced in the direction of the second end of the housing as the flexible member moves from the substantially closed position to the substantially open position.

3. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the shape of the flexible member urges the fluid passageway more tightly closed near the first end of the housing when the passageway is under fluid pressure.

4. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein an external surface on the flexible member in the substantially closed position contacts an internal surface of the interior cavity of the housing in a region near the first end of the housing.

5. The medical connector of claim 4, wherein a portion of an interior surface of the housing between the first end and the second end is tapered.

6. The medical connector of claim 5, wherein the fluid passageway is wider when the flexible member is in its substantially open position than in its substantially closed position.

7. The medical connector of claim 6, wherein a first external surface of the housing near the first end has a first cross-sectional area, a second external surface of the housing closer to the second end than the first external surface has a second cross-sectional area, and the first cross-sectional area is smaller than the second cross-section area.

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