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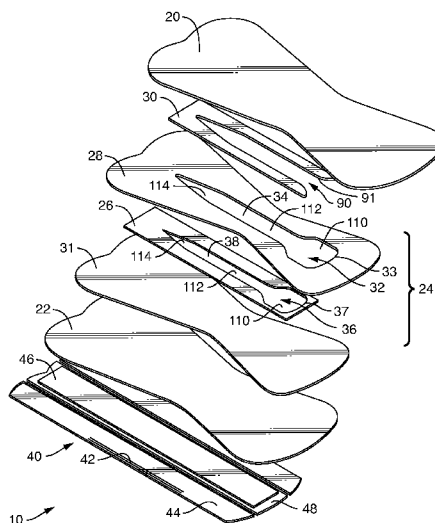


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: An absorbent article includes a body side liner, a back sheet, an absorbent body positioned between the body side liner and the back sheet, and a distribution layer positioned between the absorbent body and the back sheet. The absorbent body defines a first opening having an opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent body length. The first opening has a median anterior portion width that is greater than a median central portion width that is greater than a median posterior portion width. The first opening includes a well, a channel, and a taper. The well transitions into the channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition. The channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition.



ABSORBENT ARTICLE WITH RECESSED BODY CONFORMING STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[001] Absorbent articles such as sanitary napkins, panty liners, and incontinence pads are designed to absorb and retain fluid discharges from the human body. It is desirable that such absorbent articles conform to the body of the wearer during use. An absorbent article with body-conforming structure can increase the effectiveness of the absorbent article by reducing the possibility that fluids such as menses or urine will leak past the perimeter of the absorbent article. Additionally, an absorbent article with body-conforming structure can also be more comfortable to wear as compared to similar absorbent articles without the body-conforming structure.

[002] Maintaining an absorbent article, such as an incontinence pad, in the proper position relative to the body of the wearer is difficult because of the external forces that are exerted upon the absorbent article under dynamic conditions. These external forces may be a result of the attachment of the absorbent garment to the wearer's clothes or may be a result of body movement, in particular, thigh movement. In use, these forces may cause the absorbent article to pull away from the body or shift from the desired position.

[003] Previous absorbent articles have attempted to introduce deformation regions or points in the article to localize the deformation and help conform the article to the body. While these attempts have had some success, there remains a need for fluid-absorbing absorbent articles with a structure adapted to intake fluid quickly, maintain a dry surface, distribute fluid effectively throughout the product, and conform to body contours during use.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[004] In one aspect, the present invention provides an absorbent article having a body side liner, a back sheet, an absorbent body positioned between the body side liner and the back sheet, and a distribution layer positioned between the absorbent body and the back sheet. The absorbent body defines an absorbent

body length and a first opening. The first opening has an opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent body length. The first opening defines an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width. The median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width. The anterior portion includes a well, the central portion includes a channel, and the posterior portion includes a taper. The well transitions into the channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition. The channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition.

[005] In various embodiments the first opening defines a first opening area. The absorbent body has an absorbent body perimeter that defines an absorbent body area and a minimum width. In some embodiments, the first opening area is at least 30% of the absorbent body area and the median central portion width is 25-50% the minimum width.

[006] In some embodiments, the absorbent body includes a body side absorbent layer and an absorbent pledget layer positioned between the body side absorbent layer and the distribution layer. In some embodiments, the absorbent pledget defines an absorbent pledget length and a second opening. The second opening has a second opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent pledget length.

[007] In some embodiments, the second opening defines a second opening area equal to the first opening area. In some embodiments, the second opening defines a second opening area less than the first opening area.

[008] In some embodiments, the first opening defines a first opening shape and the second opening defines a second opening shape that is substantially the same as the first opening shape.

[009] In some embodiments, the first opening defines a first longitudinal centerline and a first lateral centerline wherein the first opening is symmetric about the first longitudinal centerline and asymmetric about the first lateral centerline. Additionally, the first lateral centerline divides the first opening into an anterior half

having an anterior half area and a posterior half having a posterior half area wherein the anterior half area is greater than the posterior half area.

[010] In some embodiments, the body side absorbent layer includes concave lateral side edges that define a minimum width and the median central portion width is 25-50% the minimum width.

[011] In another aspect, the present invention provides an absorbent article having a body side liner, a back sheet, and a body side absorbent layer positioned between the body side liner and the back sheet. The body side absorbent layer includes concave lateral side edges and a first opening and defines a body side absorbent length. The absorbent article also includes an absorbent pledget positioned between the body side absorbent layer and the back sheet. The absorbent pledget includes a second opening and defines an absorbent pledget length. The first opening has a first opening length that is at least 50% the body side absorbent layer length. The first opening defines an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width. In the first opening, the anterior portion includes a well, the central portion includes a channel, and the posterior portion includes a taper. The well transitions into the channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition. The channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition.

[012] The second opening has a second opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent pledget length. The second opening defines an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width. In the second opening, the anterior portion includes a well, the central portion includes a channel, and the posterior portion includes a taper. The well transitions into the

channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition. The channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition.

[013] In various embodiments, the first opening and the second opening are symmetric about a longitudinal centerline and asymmetric about a lateral centerline. Additionally, the concave lateral edges of the body side absorbent layer define a minimum width and the minimum width is positioned between the lateral centerline and the anterior portion of the first opening.

[014] In some embodiments, the first opening defines a first opening area and the second opening defines a second opening area less than the first opening area. Additionally, the first opening defines a first opening shape and the second opening defines a second opening shape that is substantially the same as the first opening shape.

[015] In some embodiments, the body side absorbent comprises 30-50% superabsorbent and the absorbent pledget comprises 50-70% superabsorbent. In some embodiments, the absorbent article further includes an intake/distribution layer positioned between the absorbent pledget and the back sheet.

[016] In some embodiments, the body side liner includes a third opening having a third opening area and a third opening shape. The third opening shape is substantially the same as the first opening shape and the second opening shape. The third opening area is less than the first opening area and less than the second opening area. In some embodiments, the third opening defines a third peripheral edge bonded directly to the intake/distribution layer to form an inner peripheral sealed edge.

[017] In another aspect, the present invention provides an array of absorbent articles. The array includes a first absorbent article and a second absorbent article. The first absorbent article includes a first body side liner, a first back sheet, and a first absorbent body positioned between the first body side liner and the first back sheet. The first absorbent body includes a first opening and defines a first absorbent body length. The first opening has a first opening length that is at least 50% the first absorbent body length. The first opening defines a first opening area, a first opening shape, an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion

positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width.

[018] The second absorbent article includes a second body side liner, a second back sheet, a second absorbent body positioned between the second body side liner and the second back sheet. The second absorbent body includes a second opening and defines a second absorbent body length. The second opening has a second opening length that is at least 50% the second absorbent body length. The second opening defines a second opening area, a second opening shape, an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width. The first absorbent body length is at least 10% greater than the second absorbent body length and the first opening shape is substantially the same as the second opening shape.

[019] In some embodiments, the first absorbent body includes a first absorbent body peripheral edge that defines a first absorbent body shape. Likewise, the second absorbent body includes a second absorbent body peripheral edge that defines a second absorbent body shape. The second absorbent body shape is different than the first absorbent body shape.

[020] In some embodiments, the array may further include a third absorbent article. The third absorbent article includes a third body side liner, a third back sheet, a third absorbent body positioned between the third body side liner and the third back sheet, and a body conforming structure positioned in direct facing relation with the third body side liner. The body conforming structure is aligned with a longitudinal centerline of the absorbent article. The body conforming structure defines an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a

median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width. The body conforming structure includes a peripheral edge that defines a body conforming shape that is substantially the same as the first opening shape and the second opening shape.

[021] In some embodiments, the third absorbent body defines a third absorbent body length and the body conforming structure defines a body conforming structure length that is at least 50% the third absorbent body length.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 representatively illustrates a top perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 representatively illustrates a top perspective view of the embodiment of **Fig. 1** with portions cut away to illustrate underlying structure.

Fig. 3 representatively illustrates an expanded perspective view of the embodiment of **Fig. 1**.

Fig. 4 representatively illustrates a top plan view of the embodiment of **Fig. 1** with portions cut away to illustrate underlying structure.

Fig. 5 representatively illustrates a top plan view of the body side absorbent layer of **Figs. 1-4**.

Fig. 6 representatively illustrates a top plan view of the absorbent pledget of **Figs. 1-4**.

Fig. 7 representatively illustrates a top perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 8 representatively illustrates a top perspective view of the embodiment of **Fig. 7** with portions cut away to illustrate underlying structure.

Fig. 9 representatively illustrates exemplary arrays of articles of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[022] The disposable absorbent articles of the present invention include an opening in liquid communication with an intake and/or distribution layer and

positioned to align with the female anatomy. Specifically, the opening is shaped and positioned such that the anterior portion of the opening is generally aligned with the urethra, the central portion of the opening is generally aligned with the labia, and the posterior portion of the opening is generally aligned with the gluteal cleft.

[023] In use, it is believed that the anterior portion of the opening allows fluid to quickly enter the intake and/or distribution layer which accepts and temporarily holds urine insults making it less likely to run-off the topsheet surface and leak. After insult, the anterior portion is believed to quickly become saturated, thus making the fluid available to move rearward into the central portion and the posterior portion. Additionally, the geometry of the opening is believed to promote conformance of the absorbent article to the body initially and during use. Specifically, the different widths, shapes, and transitions of the various portions of the opening are believed to promote selective bending, cupping, and peaking to better conform to the wearer's body.

[024] **Figs. 1-4** representatively illustrate a first embodiment of a disposable absorbent article **10** of the present invention. **Fig. 1** is a top perspective view of the absorbent article **10**. **Fig. 2** is a top perspective view of the absorbent article **10** with portions cut away to illustrate underlying structure. **Fig. 3** is an expanded view of the absorbent article **10** of **Fig. 1**. **Fig. 4** is a top plan view of the absorbent article **10** of **Fig. 1** with portions cut away to reveal underlying structure. The absorbent article **10** includes a liquid-permeable top sheet (also referred to as a body side liner) **20**, a substantially liquid-impermeable back sheet **22**, and an absorbent body **24** positioned between the back sheet **22** and the topsheet **20**. Optionally, the absorbent article **10** may also include a lower intake and/or distribution layer **31** positioned between the back sheet **22** and the absorbent body **24**. Optionally, the absorbent article **10** may also include an upper intake and/or distribution layer **30** positioned between the topsheet **20** and the absorbent body **24**. In some embodiments, the absorbent articles of the present invention may further include containment flaps, garment attachment adhesive, a peel strip, or combinations thereof. For example, the absorbent article **10** illustrated in **Figs. 1-4** includes containment flaps **40** which in turn include containment elastics **42** and a

containment flap carrier web **44**. Likewise, the absorbent article **10** of **Figs. 1-4** is shown with an optional garment attachment adhesive **46** applied to the back sheet **22** and covered with a peel strip **48**.

[025] In various embodiments, the absorbent body **24** may consist of a single layer of material or may consist of two or more layers of material. For example, the absorbent body **24** may consist of two layers of material as illustrated in **Fig. 3**. Specifically, the absorbent body **24** may include an absorbent pledget **26** and a body side absorbent layer **28**. The absorbent pledget **26** may be positioned towards the back sheet **22** and the body side absorbent layer **28** may be superposed over the absorbent pledget **26** and positioned towards the topsheet **20** as illustrated. In other embodiments, the relative orientation of the absorbent pledget and the body side absorbent layer may be reversed (not illustrated). Whether a single layer or multiple layers, the absorbent body defines an absorbent body length, an absorbent body width, and an absorbent body perimeter. The absorbent body perimeter further defines an absorbent body area. In embodiments wherein the absorbent body includes two or more layers, the absorbent body length, the absorbent body width, the absorbent body perimeter, and the absorbent body area are defined by the furthest extent, in the plane defined by the longitudinal direction and the lateral direction, of any of the layers.

[026] In various embodiments, the absorbent body may include an opening therein. In embodiments wherein the absorbent body includes multiple layers, one or more of the layers may include openings therein. For example, the body side absorbent layer may include an opening when the absorbent pledget does not (not illustrated). In other embodiments, the absorbent pledget may include an opening when the body side absorbent layer does not (not illustrated). In some embodiments both the body side absorbent layer and the absorbent pledget may include openings. For example, as illustrated in **Fig. 3**, the body side absorbent layer **28** may include a first opening **32** and the absorbent pledget **26** may include a second opening **36**. Together, the first opening **32** and the second opening **36** may define or may partially define a composite opening **25** (**Fig. 2**). In various embodiments, the body side absorbent layer **28** and/or the absorbent pledget **26** may have openings that are completely bound by the defining layer through which

the respective opening passes. For example, as illustrated in **Fig. 3**, the first opening **32** is completely bound by the body side absorbent layer **28**. Likewise, the second opening **36** is completely bound by the absorbent pledget **26**.

[027] The first opening **32** defines a first peripheral edge **33** and defines a first area **34**. Likewise, the second opening **36** defines a second peripheral edge **37** and defines a second area **38**. In various embodiments, the first area **34** may be greater than, less than, or equal to the second area **38**. In some embodiments, the second area **38** is less than the first area **34** as illustrated in **Figs. 2 and 3**. In some embodiments, also as illustrated in **Fig. 2**, the first opening **32** and the second opening **36** are aligned and concentric so as to form a composite opening **25** with graduated side walls **27** which are believed to allow quick access of fluid to the individual absorbent body layers.

[028] In various embodiments, the openings may have any suitable shape. In some embodiments, the openings are shaped to conform to the perineal floor of the wearer. Referring now to **Fig. 5**, a top plan view of the body side absorbent layer **28** of **Figs. 1-4** is representatively illustrated. The body side absorbent layer **28** includes the first opening **32** which is shaped to conform to the perineal floor of the wearer. The first opening **32** defines a first opening peripheral edge **33** and also defines a first opening area **34**. Likewise, **Fig. 6** representatively illustrates a top plan view of the absorbent pledget **26** of **Figs. 1-4**. The absorbent pledget **26** includes the second opening **36** which is also shaped to conform to the perineal floor of the wearer. The second opening **36** defines a second opening peripheral edge **37** and also defines a second opening area **38**.

[029] In various embodiments, the first opening **32** and/or the second opening **36** may be symmetrical about a longitudinal centerline **50** of the respective opening. In some embodiments, the first opening **32** and/or the second opening **36** may be asymmetrical about a lateral centerline **52** of the respective opening. For example, as illustrated in **Figs. 5 and 6**, the first opening **32** and the second opening **36** are both symmetrical about the longitudinal centerline **50** and both are asymmetrical about the lateral centerline **52**.

[030] The lateral centerline **52** divides the respective openings into an anterior half **64** and a posterior half **66**. The anterior half **64** defines an anterior half area

65 and the posterior half **66** defines a posterior half area **67**. As used herein, the term “anterior” refers to the portion of the opening, layer, or article that is adapted to be oriented towards the front of the wearer in normal use. Likewise, as used herein, the term “posterior” refers to the portion of the opening, layer, or article that is adapted to be oriented towards the back of the wearer in normal use. In various embodiments, the anterior half area **65** is greater than the posterior half area **67**.

[031] The various openings of the present invention also define an anterior portion **56**, a posterior portion **60**, and a central portion **58** positioned between the anterior portion **56** and the posterior portion **60**. The anterior portion **56** is defined as the anterior third of the opening, the central portion **58** is defined as the middle third of the opening, and the posterior portion **60** is defined as the posterior third of the opening, all as measured relative to the longitudinal centerline **50**.

[032] In some embodiments, the absorbent articles of the present invention include lateral side edges of any suitable shape. For example, the lateral side edges may be straight or may have an arcuate shape such as concave, convex, wavy, or combinations thereof. Referring again to **Figs. 1** and **4**, the absorbent article **10** is illustrated with lateral side edges **53** that are concave. The combination of the two lateral side edges **53** in this embodiment combine to create a curved shape. Likewise, the absorbent body of the present invention may include lateral side edges of any suitable shape. For example, the lateral side edges of the absorbent body may be straight or may have an arcuate shape, such as concave, convex, wavy, or combinations thereof. Likewise, one or more of the layers of the absorbent body may include lateral side edges that are straight, concave, convex, or combinations thereof. For example, referring now to **Fig. 5**, the body side absorbent layer **28** is illustrated with lateral side edges **54** that are concave. The concave lateral side edges **54** define a minimum width **61**. In comparison, **Fig. 6** illustrates the absorbent pledget **26** with lateral side edges **55** that are straight. The straight lateral side edges **55** define a minimum width **62**.

[033] In some embodiments, the minimum width of the body side absorbent layer is generally aligned with the lateral centerline of the first opening (not illustrated). In some embodiments, the minimum width **61** of the body side

absorbent layer **28** is aligned between the lateral centerline of the first opening **32** and the anterior portion **56** of the first opening **32** as illustrated in **Fig. 5**.

[034] In some embodiments, the first opening may have a shape that is different than the shape of the second opening (not illustrated). In some embodiments, the first opening **32** may have a shape that is the same or is substantially the same as the shape of the second opening **36**. For example, referring now to **Figs. 5** and **6**, the shape of the first opening **32** and the second opening **36** are substantially the same.

[035] As illustrated, the anterior portion **56** of both openings **32** and **36** includes a well portion **110** that is generally rectangular in shape and has a relatively wide lateral dimension. In use, the well portion **110** is adapted to be positioned adjacent to the user's urethra. This positioning in conjunction with this shaping of the well portion **110** is believed to minimize folding of the absorbent article in this region and thereby preserve the void volume of the well portion **110** to receive body fluids.

[036] Likewise, the central portion **58** of both openings **32** and **36** includes a channel portion **112** that is generally rectangular in shape and has a longitudinal dimension that is greater than the lateral dimension. In use, the channel portion **112** is adapted to be positioned proximate the labia. This positioning in conjunction with the shaping of the channel portion **112** is believed to allow compression of the absorbent article **10**, the body side absorbent layer **28** and/or the absorbent pledget **26** by the user's legs while still allowing fluid to move freely between the anterior portion **56** and the posterior portion **60**.

[037] The posterior portion **60** of both openings **32** and **36** includes a taper portion **114** that is generally shaped like an acute triangle in which the smallest of the three angles is located at the posterior end of the shape. In various embodiments, the taper portion **114** of either or both the first opening **32** or the second opening **36** may come to a relatively sharp corner as illustrated in **Fig. 6** or may come to a more rounded corner as illustrated in **Fig. 5**. In use, the taper portion **114** is adapted to be positioned proximate the gluteal cleft. This positioning in conjunction with the shaping of the taper portion **114** is believed to promote a

longitudinal peak in the posterior portion of the absorbent article that aligns with the gluteal cleft.

[038] The transition between the well portion and the channel portion is marked by a distinct but gentle change in curvature. In some embodiments, the longitudinal edges **119** of the well portions **110** include sections **121** that are generally parallel to the longitudinal centerline **50**. Likewise, in some embodiments, the longitudinal edges **119** of the channel portions **112** include sections **123** that are generally parallel to the longitudinal centerline **50**. In these and other embodiments, the well portions **110** transition into the channel portions **112** with both a first convex transition **117** and a concave transition **116** along both longitudinal edges **119** of both openings **32** and **36**. The first convex transition **117** may define any suitable angle **167**. In some embodiments, the angle **167** may be 110 to 160 degrees, 120 to 150 degrees, or about 135 degrees. Likewise, the concave transition **116** may define any suitable angle **166**. In some embodiments, the angle **166** may be 30 to 60 degrees, 40 to 50 degrees, or about 45 degrees. It is believed that these transitions and these angles create localized deformation regions that act as stress concentrators. In use, the absorbent articles tend to create gentle bends proximate the stress concentrators and thus facilitate conformance of the article to the body at that position.

[039] The transition between the channel portion and the taper portion is also marked by a distinct change in curvature. For example, the channel portions **112** transition into the taper portions **114** at a second convex transition **118** along both longitudinal edges **119** of both openings **32** and **36**. The second convex transition **118** may define any suitable angle **168**. In some embodiments, the angle **168** may be 5 to 30 degrees, 10 to 20 degrees, or about 10 degrees. These transitions are also believed to create localized deformation regions that act as stress concentrators. In use, the concave transitions **116** and the convex transitions **118** are believed to promote gentle controlled bending of the absorbent article at the location of the stress concentrators. This controlled bending further allows the absorbent article to conform to the wearer's body and allows the well portion, the channel portion, and the taper portion to be properly aligned with the user's body.

[040] In some embodiments, the absorbent article **10** may have a perimeter **95** of any suitable shape as discussed above. For example, in some embodiments, the perimeter **95** may include a concave dip **102** in the posterior portion of the absorbent article **10** as illustrated in **Figs. 2** and **4**. In some embodiments, the concave dip **102** may be substantially aligned with the longitudinal centerline of the first opening **32** and/or the second opening **36** to promote a longitudinal peak in the posterior portion of the absorbent article **10** during use.

[041] Referring to **Fig. 5**, the first opening **32** has a first opening length **70**. Likewise, the body side absorbent layer **28** has a body side absorbent length **72**. In a first embodiment, the body side absorbent length **72** may be 160 to 190 mm, 170 to 180 mm, or about 175 mm. In these embodiments, the first opening length **70** may be 110 to 135 mm, 115 to 125 mm, or about 120 mm. In a second embodiment, the body side absorbent length **72** may be 235 to 265 mm, 245 to 255 mm, or about 250mm. In these embodiments, the first opening length **70** may be 165 to 190 mm, 175 to 185 mm, or about 180 mm. In a third embodiment, the body side absorbent length **72** may be 275 to 305 mm, 280 to 300 mm, or about 290 mm. In these embodiments, the first opening length **70** may be 190 to 215 mm, 200 to 210 mm, or about 205 mm. In a fourth embodiment, the body side absorbent length **72** may be 325 to 410 mm, 335 to 345 mm, or about 340 mm. In these embodiments, the first opening length **70** may be 225 to 250 mm, 235 to 245 mm, or about 240 mm. In various embodiments, the first opening length **70** may be at least 50%, at least 60%, or at least 70% of the body side absorbent length **72**.

[042] The first opening **32** has a first opening width. The first opening width may be variable along the longitudinal centerline **50**. For example, the first opening **32** defines a median anterior portion width **74**, a median central portion width **76**, and a median posterior portion width **78**. As used herein, the “median width” of a given portion is the numeric value separating the higher half of the widths within a given portion from the lower half of the widths within the same portion. The median width can be determined by measuring the width of a given portion at 1 mm intervals along the longitudinal centerline, arranging the measured values from lowest to highest and selecting the middle value. If there is an even

number of measurements, then the median width is the average of the middle two measurements. In some embodiments, the median anterior portion width **74** is greater than the median central portion width **76**, which is greater than the median posterior portion width **78**. In some embodiments, the median anterior portion width **74** may be 40 – 60 mm, 45 – 55 mm, or about 52 mm. In some embodiments, the median central portion width **76** may be 10 – 40 mm, 20 – 30 mm, or about 27 mm. In some embodiments, the median posterior portion width **78** may be 7 – 30 mm, 10 – 20 mm, or about 15 mm.

[043] The body side absorbent layer **28** also defines a minimum width **61**. In the first embodiment, the minimum width **61** may be 40 to 65 mm, 45 to 60 mm, or about 55 mm. In the second embodiment, the third embodiment, and the fourth embodiment, the minimum width **61** may be 50 to 75 mm, 55 to 65 mm, or about 60 mm. In some embodiments, the median central portion width **76** of the first opening **32** is 25-50% the minimum width **61** of the body side absorbent layer **28**. In some embodiments, the median central portion width **76** of the first opening **32** is 40-45% the minimum width **61** of the body side absorbent layer **28**.

[044] The first opening **32** defines a first opening peripheral edge **33** which in turn defines a first opening area **34**. Likewise, the body side absorbent layer **28** defines a body side absorbent perimeter **96** and the body side absorbent perimeter **96** defines a body side absorbent area **97**. The body side absorbent area **97** includes the first opening area **34**. In the first embodiment, the body side absorbent area **97** may be 90 to 110 cm², 95 to 105 cm², or about 100 cm². In these embodiments, the first opening area **34** may be 30 to 40 cm², 32 to 36 cm², or about 34 cm². In the second embodiment, the body side absorbent area **97** may be 180 to 210 cm², 190 to 200 cm², or about 195 cm². In these embodiments, the first opening area **34** may be 30 to 45 cm², 35 to 40 cm², or about 39 cm². In the third embodiment, the body side absorbent area **97** may be 220 to 260 cm², 230 to 250 cm², or about 240 cm². In these embodiments, the first opening area **34** may be 40 to 55 cm², 45 to 50 cm², or about 48 cm². In the fourth embodiment, the body side absorbent area **97** may be 300 to 390 cm², 310 to 335 cm², or about 325 cm². In these embodiments, the first opening area **34** may be 55 to 75 cm², 60 to 70 cm², or about 65 cm². In various embodiments, the first opening area **34**

may be at least 15%, at least 20%, or at least 30% of the body side absorbent area **97**. In some embodiments, the first opening area **34** may be about 20% of the body side absorbent area **97**.

[045] Referring now to **Fig. 6**, the second opening **36** has a second opening length **80**. Likewise, the absorbent pledget **26** has an absorbent pledget length **82**. In the first embodiment, the absorbent pledget length **82** may be 140 to 160 mm, 145 to 155 mm, or about 150 mm. In these embodiments, the second opening length **80** may be 125 to 135 mm, 128 to 132 mm, or about 130 mm. In the second embodiment, the absorbent pledget length **82** may be 165 to 185 mm, 170 to 180 mm, or about 175 mm. In these embodiments, the second opening length **80** may be 150 to 165 mm, 155 to 160 mm, or about 157 mm. In the third embodiment, the absorbent pledget length **82** may be 185 to 215 mm, 190 to 210 mm, or about 200 mm. In these embodiments, the second opening length **80** may be 170 to 190 mm, 175 to 185 mm, or about 180 mm. In the fourth embodiment, the absorbent pledget length **82** may be 240 to 270 mm, 250 to 260 mm, or about 255 mm. In these embodiments, the second opening length **80** may be 200 to 225 mm, 205 to 215 mm, or about 210 mm. In various embodiments, the second opening length **80** may be at least 50%, at least 60%, at least 70%, or at least 80% of the absorbent pledget length **82**.

[046] The second opening **36** has a second opening width. The second opening width may be variable along the longitudinal centerline **50**. For example, the second opening **36** defines a median anterior portion width **84**, a median central portion width **86**, and a median posterior portion width **88**. In some embodiments, the median anterior portion width **84** is greater than the median central portion width **86**, which is greater than the median posterior portion width **88**. In some embodiments, the median anterior portion width **84** may be 30 – 50 mm, 35 – 45 mm, or about 42 mm. In some embodiments, the median central portion width **86** may be 10 – 25 mm, 12 – 20 mm, or about 17 mm. In some embodiments, the median posterior portion width **88** may be 1 – 20 mm, 5 – 15 mm, or about 7 mm.

[047] In some embodiments, the absorbent pledget **26** has a minimum width **62** of 40 to 60 mm or about 51 mm. In some embodiments, the median central

portion width **76** of the second opening **36** is 25-50% the minimum width **62** of the absorbent pledget **26**. In some embodiments, the median central portion width **76** of the second opening **36** is 30-40% the minimum width **62** of the absorbent pledget **26**.

[048] The second opening **36** defines a second opening peripheral edge **37** which in turn defines a second opening area **38**. Likewise, the absorbent pledget **26** defines an outer perimeter **98** and the outer perimeter **98** defines an absorbent pledget area **99**. The absorbent pledget area **99** includes the second opening area **38**. In the first embodiment, the absorbent pledget area **99** may be 65 to 90 cm², 70 to 80 cm², or about 75 cm². In these embodiments, the second opening area **38** may be 17 to 21 cm². In the second embodiment, the absorbent pledget area **99** may be 70 to 110 cm², 75 to 100 cm², or about 89 cm². In these embodiments, the second opening area **38** may be 20 to 30 cm², 22 to 27 cm², or about 24 cm². In the third embodiment, the absorbent pledget area **99** may be 80 to 120 cm², 85 to 110 cm², or about 102 cm². In these embodiments, the second opening area **38** may be 25 to 35 cm², 27 to 32 cm², or about 29 cm². In the fourth embodiment, the absorbent pledget area **99** may be 100 to 160 cm², 120 to 140 cm², or about 130 cm². In these embodiments, the second opening area **38** may be 30 to 45 cm², 35 to 40 cm², or about 39 cm². In various embodiments, the second opening area **38** may be at least 20%, at least 25%, or at least 30% the absorbent pledget area **99**. In some embodiments, the second opening area **38** may be 25-30% the absorbent pledget area **99**.

[049] In some embodiments, the absorbent article may optionally include an upper distribution and/or intake layer. For example, referring again to **Figs. 3** and **4**, the absorbent article **10** is illustrated with an upper distribution/intake layer **30** positioned between the body-side absorbent layer **28** and the top sheet **20**. In various embodiments, the upper distribution/intake layer may include a third opening **90** having a third opening peripheral edge **91**. In various embodiments, the opening in the upper distribution/intake layer may be fully bound by the upper distribution/intake layer (not shown). In other embodiments, the third opening **90** in the upper distribution/intake layer **30** may be partially bound by the upper distribution/intake layer **30** as illustrated in **Figs. 2-4**.

[050] The upper distribution/intake layer **30** is believed to provide an additional body conforming barrier and temporary fluid storage region for fluid moving in the lateral and posterior directions. This barrier is believed to result from the deformation and conformance of this layer into and around body creases as a result of the resilience and low force required to deform this layer.

[051] In some embodiments, the absorbent article may optionally include a lower distribution/intake layer. For example, referring again to **Figs. 2-4**, absorbent article **10** is illustrated with a lower distribution/intake layer **31** positioned between the back sheet layer **22** and the absorbent body **24**. In various embodiments, the lower distribution/intake layer **31** may be coextensive with the absorbent body **24** as illustrated in **Fig. 2**. In some embodiments, the lower distribution/intake layer may be smaller or larger than the absorbent body (not illustrated). The openings **32**, **36**, and/or **90** (collectively the composite opening **25**) of the absorbent article are positioned such that the anterior portion **56** is adjacent to the user's urethral opening during use. When a urine insult occurs, the fluid passes through the topsheet and into the composite opening **25** and then enters the lower distribution/intake layer **31**. It is believed that the urine is quickly distributed into the central and posterior portions **58** and **60** respectively and over time the fluid is distributed throughout the lower distribution/intake layer **31** and is passed into the garment side of the absorbent body **24** and/or absorbent pledget **26**. This intake and distribution arrangement is believed to result in an absorbent structure with relatively dry upper layers.

[052] An additional advantage of the present invention is that the shape of the openings allows the absorbent article to compress and expand when pressure is applied and removed by the movement of the upper thighs during wear. This product feature is believed to provide improved dynamic fit.

[053] In some embodiments, the top sheet may have an opening aligned with one or more of the other openings **32**, **36**, and/or **90**. For example, **Figs. 7** and **8** representatively illustrate another exemplary absorbent article **120** having a fourth opening **122**. **Fig. 7** is a top perspective view of the absorbent article **120**. **Fig. 8** is a top perspective view of the absorbent article **120** with portions cut away to illustrate underlying structure.

[054] The fourth opening **122** defines a fourth opening peripheral edge **124** and defines a fourth opening area **125**. In some embodiments, the fourth opening **122** may have a fourth opening area **125** less than the openings **32**, **36**, and/or **90** as illustrated in **Fig. 8**. In these embodiments, the peripheral edge **124** of the fourth opening **122** may be bonded to the lower distribution/intake layer **31** forming an inner peripheral sealed edge **126**. Forming an inner peripheral sealed edge **126** may be beneficial for containing superabsorbent polymer or other absorbent materials within the various absorbent layers. In various embodiments, the peripheral edge of the fourth opening may be bonded to the absorbent pledget, the body side absorbent layer, the upper distribution/intake layer, the lower distribution/intake layer, or combinations thereof.

[055] In various embodiments, the liquid permeable top sheet **20** may be made from any suitable material or combination of materials that are adapted to handle menses and/or urine. The topsheet **20** may include a layer constructed of any operative material, and may be a composite material. The top sheet **20** can include a woven fabric, a nonwoven fabric, a polymer film, a film-nonwoven fabric laminate or the like, as well as combinations thereof. An exemplary top sheet material is a 20 gsm spunbond web made of 100% polypropylene fibers. In various embodiments, the top sheet material may be treated with a hydrophilic wetting agent.

[056] The substantially liquid-impermeable back sheet **22** may be made from any suitable material or combination of materials. For example, the back sheet **22** may include a polymeric film, a woven fabric, a nonwoven fabric, or the like, as well as combinations or composites thereof. For example, the back sheet may include a polymer film laminated to a woven or nonwoven fabric. In a particular feature, the polymer film can be composed of polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester or the like, as well as combinations thereof. An exemplary back sheet may include 0.9 mil polyethylene film.

[057] The upper distribution/intake layer **30** may be any suitable material adapted for receiving surges of urine. The upper distribution/intake layer **30** may be a single layer of material or multiple layers of material. Suitable upper distribution/intake layers **30** are taught in U.S. Pat. No. 5,562,650 to Everett et al.,

the entirety of which is incorporated herein where not contradictory. In some embodiments the upper distribution/intake layer **30** may be a single layer of 128 gsm bonded-carded web with through air bonded hollow polypropylene fibers.

[058] The lower distribution/intake layer **31** may include one or more layers. The lower distribution/intake layer **31** may have the same composition as the upper distribution/intake layer **30** or it may be different. An exemplary material for use as the lower distribution/intake layer **31** includes 128-130 gsm bonded-carded web with through air bonded hollow polypropylene fibers.

[059] The material used for the absorbent pledget layer **26** may include cellulosic fibers (e.g., wood pulp fibers), other natural fibers, synthetic fibers, woven or nonwoven sheets, scrim netting or other stabilizing structures, superabsorbent material, binder materials, surfactants, selected hydrophobic materials, pigments, lotions, odor control agents or the like, as well as combinations thereof. In some embodiments, the absorbent pledget layer **26** is a matrix of cellulosic fluff and superabsorbent hydrogel-forming particles. In addition the absorbent pledget layer may be wrapped by a liquid permeable wrapsheet to maintain the integrity when wet and to inhibit migration of absorbent materials.

[060] The cellulosic fluff may comprise a blend of wood pulp fluff. The superabsorbent material may be present in the absorbent in an amount of from about 0 to about 90 weight percent based on total weight. The absorbent material may have a density within the range of about 0.1 to about 0.45 grams per cubic centimeter. In some embodiments the density is greater than 0.25 g/cc.

Superabsorbent materials are well known in the art and can be selected from natural, synthetic, and modified natural polymers and materials. The superabsorbent materials can be inorganic materials, such as silica gels, or organic compounds, such as crosslinked polymers. Typically, a superabsorbent material is capable of absorbing at least about 15 times its weight in liquid, and suitably is capable of absorbing more than about 25 times its weight in liquid. Suitable superabsorbent materials are readily available from various suppliers.

[061] In addition to cellulosic fibers and superabsorbent materials, the absorbent pledget layer may also contain adhesive elements and/or synthetic fibers that provide stabilization and attachment when appropriately activated.

Additives such as adhesives may be of the same or different aspect from the cellulosic fibers; for example, such additives may be fibrous, particulate, or in liquid form; adhesives may possess either a curable or a heat-set property. Such additives can enhance the integrity of the bulk absorbent structure, and, alternatively or additionally, may provide adherence between facing layers of the folded structure.

[062] The absorbent pledget **26** may be a single layer of absorbent materials or may be a multilayer structure. Each of the layers can contain similar materials or different materials. Absorbent pledget layer **26** may be partially or wholly wrapped or encompassed by a suitable tissue or nonwoven wrap that aids in maintaining the integrity and shape of the pad. One suitable wrapsheet is 12 gsm wettable spunbond-meltblown-spunbond laminate.

[063] The body side absorbent layer **28** may be a single layer of absorbent material or may be a multiple layer structure. In some embodiments, the body side absorbent layer **28** may be made with the same materials as described above with regard to the absorbent pledget **26**. In some embodiments, the body side absorbent layer **28** is a thermally-bonded, stabilized airlaid fibrous web such as 100 gsm airlaid. The body side absorbent layer may optionally include a similar, stabilized airlaid fibrous web. In some embodiments, the absorbent body may include a body side absorbent layer having 30-50% or about 40% superabsorbent material in combination with an absorbent pledget having 50-70% or about 60% superabsorbent material.

[064] The garment attachment adhesive **46** may be applied to the garment side of the back sheet **22**. The garment attachment adhesive **46** may be composed of any suitable adhesive. For example, the garment attachment adhesive **46** may be a pressure-sensitive adhesive such as EASYMELT 34-5602, available from National Starch and Chemical Company.

[065] The peel strip **48** may be added to cover the garment attachment adhesive **46** to prevent adhesive contamination. Examples of suitable peel strips **48** include a silicone coated Kraft paper, a silicone coated film, or the like. Other release coatings include coatings containing polytetrafluoroethylene.

[066] The containment flaps **40** of the present invention may consist of a carrier web **44**, containment elastics **42**, and construction adhesive (not shown). The flap carrier web **44** is desirably constructed of a liquid impermeable material, but may instead be constructed of a liquid permeable material. An example of an acceptable carrier web is a 26.5 gsm spunbond web made of polypropylene fibers. A wide variety of elastic materials may be used for the containment elastics **42**. As is well known to those skilled in the art, suitable elastic materials include sheets, strands or ribbons of natural rubber, synthetic rubber, or thermoplastic elastomeric polymers. The elastic materials can be stretched and adhered to a substrate, adhered to a gathered substrate, or adhered to a substrate and then elasticized or shrunk, for example, with the application of heat, such that elastic retractive forces are imparted to the substrate.

[067] In some aspects, any of the various absorbent articles with the various openings described herein may be part of one or more arrays of products. For example, referring now to **Fig. 9**, a first array **130** of products is representatively illustrated. The first array **130** includes a first absorbent article **132** and a second absorbent article **134**. Both the first absorbent article **132** and the second absorbent article **134** are illustrated with portions cut away to illustrate underlying features.

[068] The first absorbent article of the first array **130** may have any combination of the features of the absorbent articles described herein. For example, the first absorbent article **132** may include a first body side liner **136**, a first back sheet **138**, and a first absorbent body **140** positioned between the first body side liner **136** and the first back sheet **138**. The first absorbent body **140** includes a first opening **142** and defines a first absorbent body length **144**. The first opening **142** defines a first opening length **146** that is at least 50% the first absorbent body length **144**. The first opening **142** defines a first opening shape **148**. The first opening shape **148** includes an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central

portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width.

[069] The second absorbent article of the first array **130** may have any combination of the features of the absorbent articles described herein. For example, the second absorbent article **134** may include a second body side liner **152**, a second back sheet **154**, and a second absorbent body **156** positioned between the second body side liner **152** and the second back sheet **154**. The second absorbent body **156** includes a second opening **158** and defines a second absorbent body length **160**. The second opening **158** defines a second opening length **162** that is at least 50% the second absorbent body length **160**. The second opening **158** defines a second opening shape **164**. The second opening shape **164** includes an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width.

[070] In the first array **130**, the first opening shape **148** is the same as or is substantially the same as the second opening shape **164**. In various embodiments of the first array **130**, the first absorbent body length **144** may be greater than, less than, or the same as the second absorbent body length **160**. In some embodiments, the first absorbent body length **144** may be at least 10%, at least 15%, or at least 20% greater than the second absorbent body length **160**. In various embodiments of the first array **130**, the first opening **142** may define a first opening area and the second opening **164** may define a second opening area wherein the first opening area is greater than, less than, or the same as the second opening area.

[071] In various embodiments of the first array **130**, the first absorbent body **140** defines a first absorbent body peripheral edge **141** that defines a first absorbent body shape **139**. Likewise, the second absorbent body **156** includes a second absorbent body peripheral edge **157** that defines a second absorbent body shape **155**. In various embodiments of the first array, the first absorbent body shape may

be the same as the second absorbent body shape. In other embodiments of the first array **130**, the first absorbent body shape **139** is different than the second absorbent body shape **155**. For example, as illustrated in **Fig. 9**, the first absorbent body shape **139** is curved with concave side edges and rounded ends. In comparison, the second absorbent body shape **155** is generally rectangular.

[072] Referring again to **Fig. 9**, a second array **170** of products is representatively illustrated. The second array **170** includes the second absorbent article **134** described above and a third absorbent article **172**. The third absorbent article **172** is illustrated with portions cut away to illustrate underlying features.

[073] The second absorbent article **134** of the second array **170** may have any combination of the features of the absorbent articles described herein. The third absorbent article **172** of the second array **170** may include any combination of the features of the absorbent articles described herein. For example, the third absorbent article **172** may include a third body side liner **174**, a third back sheet **176**, and a third absorbent body **178** positioned between the third body side liner **174** and the third back sheet **176**. The third absorbent body **178** defines a third absorbent body length **182**. The third absorbent article **172** also includes a body conforming structure **180** that defines a body conforming structure length **184** that is at least 50% the third absorbent body length **182**. The body conforming structure **180** defines a body conforming structure shape **186**. The body conforming structure shape **186** includes an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width. The median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width. The body conforming structure **180** is positioned in direct facing relation with the third body side liner **174**. The body conforming structure **180** may be positioned between the third body side liner **174** and the third absorbent body **178** as illustrated in **Fig. 9**. In other embodiments, the body conforming structure may be positioned on the opposite side of the third body side liner (not illustrated). Other suitable body conforming structures are described in the U.S. Patent Application entitled

“Absorbent Article With Raised Body Conforming Structure” (attorney docket 64795156US01, serial number xx/xxx,xxx) by Dieringer et al. and filed on the same date as the present application. The entirety of said application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety except where contradictory.

[074] In the second array **170**, the second opening shape **164** is the same or is substantially the same as the body conforming structure shape **186**. In various embodiments of the second array **170**, the second absorbent body length **160** may be greater than, less than, or the same as the third absorbent body length **182**. In some embodiments, the second absorbent body length **160** may be at least 10%, at least 15%, or at least 20% greater than the third absorbent body length **182**. In some embodiments, the second absorbent body length **160** may be at least 10%, at least 15%, or at least 20% less than the third absorbent body length **182**. In various embodiments of the second array **170**, the second opening **158** may define a second opening area and the body conforming structure **180** may define a body conforming structure area wherein the second opening area is greater than, less than, or the same as the body conforming structure area.

[075] In various embodiments of the second array **170**, the second absorbent body **156** defines a second absorbent body peripheral edge **157** that defines a second absorbent body shape **155**. Likewise, the third absorbent body **178** defines a third absorbent body peripheral edge **179** that defines a third absorbent body shape **177**. In various embodiments of the second array, the second absorbent body shape may be the same as the third absorbent body shape. In other embodiments of the second array **170**, the second absorbent body shape **155** is different than the third absorbent body shape **177**. For example, as illustrated in **Fig. 9**, the second absorbent body shape **155** is generally rectangular. In comparison, the third absorbent body shape **177** is generally curved with concave side edges and rounded ends.

[076] Referring again to **Fig. 9**, a third array **190** of products is representatively illustrated. The third array **190** includes the first absorbent article **132** described above, the second absorbent article **134** described above, and the third absorbent article **172** described above. However, in various embodiments, the first absorbent article **132**, the second absorbent article **134**, and/or the third absorbent article **172**

of the third array **190** may include any combination of features of the absorbent articles described herein. In the third array **190**, the first opening shape **148**, the second opening shape **164**, and the body conforming structure shape **186** are the same or are substantially the same. In various embodiments of the third array **190**, the first absorbent body length **144** may be greater than, less than, or the same as the second absorbent body length **160** and/or the third absorbent body length **182**. In various embodiments of the third array **190**, the first absorbent body shape **148** may be the same as or different than the second absorbent body shape **155** and/or the third absorbent body shape **177**.

[077] While the invention has been described in detail with respect to specific embodiments thereof, it will be appreciated that those skilled in the art, upon attaining understanding of the foregoing will readily appreciate alterations to, variations of, and equivalents to these embodiments. Accordingly, the scope of the present invention should be assessed as that of the appended claims and any equivalents thereto. Additionally, all combinations and/or sub-combinations of the disclosed embodiments, ranges, examples, and alternatives are also contemplated.

CLAIMS:

1. An absorbent article comprising,
 - a body side liner,
 - a back sheet,
 - an absorbent body positioned between the body side liner and the back sheet, and
 - a distribution layer positioned between the absorbent body and the back sheet,wherein the absorbent body defines an absorbent body length and a first opening, the first opening having an opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent body length, the first opening defining,
 - an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width,
 - a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and
 - a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width, wherein the median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width, andwherein the anterior portion includes a well, the central portion includes a channel, and the posterior portion includes a taper wherein the well transitions into the channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition and wherein the channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition.
2. The absorbent article of **claim 1** wherein the first opening defines a first opening area and the absorbent body has an absorbent body perimeter that defines an absorbent body area and a minimum width wherein the first opening area is at least 30% of the absorbent body area and the median central portion width is 25-50% the minimum width.
3. The absorbent article of **claim 1** wherein the absorbent body further comprises a body side absorbent layer and an absorbent pledget layer positioned between the body side absorbent layer and the distribution layer.

4. The absorbent article of **claim 3** wherein the absorbent pledget defines an absorbent pledget length and a second opening wherein the second opening has a second opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent pledget length.
5. The absorbent article of **claim 4** wherein the second opening defines a second opening area equal to the first opening area.
6. The absorbent article of **claim 4** wherein the second opening defines a second opening area less than the first opening area.
7. The absorbent article of **claim 6** wherein the first opening defines a first opening shape and the second opening defines a second opening shape that is substantially the same as the first opening shape.
8. The absorbent article of **claim 1** wherein the first opening defines a first longitudinal centerline and a first lateral centerline wherein the first opening is symmetric about the first longitudinal centerline and asymmetric about the first lateral centerline and wherein the first lateral centerline divides the first opening into an anterior half having an anterior half area and a posterior half having a posterior half area wherein the anterior half area is greater than the posterior half area.
9. The absorbent article of **claim 8** wherein the body side absorbent layer includes concave lateral side edges that define a minimum width and the median central portion width is 25-50% the minimum width.

10. An absorbent article comprising,

a body side liner,

a back sheet,

a body side absorbent layer positioned between the body side liner and the back sheet wherein the body side absorbent layer includes concave lateral side edges and a first opening and defines a body side absorbent length,

an absorbent pledget positioned between the body side absorbent layer and the back sheet wherein the absorbent pledget includes a second opening and defines an absorbent pledget length,

wherein the first opening has a first opening length that is at least 50% the body side absorbent layer length and defines an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width, wherein the median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width and wherein the anterior portion includes a well, the central portion includes a channel, and the posterior portion includes a taper wherein the well transitions into the channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition and wherein the channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition, and

wherein the second opening has a second opening length that is at least 50% the absorbent pledget length and defines an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width, a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width, wherein the median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width and wherein the anterior portion includes a well, the central portion includes a channel, and the posterior portion includes a taper wherein the well transitions into the channel via a first convex transition and a concave transition and wherein the channel transitions into the taper via a second convex transition.

11. The absorbent article of **claim 10** wherein

the first opening and the second opening are symmetric about a longitudinal centerline and asymmetric about a lateral centerline and

the concave lateral edges of the body side absorbent layer define a minimum width and the minimum width is positioned between the lateral centerline and the anterior portion of the first opening.

12. The absorbent article of **claim 10** wherein the first opening defines a first opening area and the second opening defines a second opening area less than the first opening area and wherein the first opening defines a first opening shape and the second opening defines a second opening shape that is substantially the same as the first opening shape.

13. The absorbent article of claim **12** wherein the body side absorbent comprises 30-50% superabsorbent and the absorbent pledget comprises 50-70% superabsorbent.

14. The absorbent article of claim **13** further comprising an intake/distribution layer positioned between the absorbent pledget and the back sheet.

15. The absorbent article of claim **14** wherein the body side liner includes a third opening having a third opening area and a third opening shape wherein the third opening shape is substantially the same as the first opening shape and the second opening shape and wherein the third opening area is less than the first opening area and less than the second opening area.

16. The absorbent article of claim **15** wherein the third opening defines a third peripheral edge bonded directly to the intake/distribution layer to form an inner peripheral sealed edge.

17. An array of absorbent articles comprising,
- a first absorbent article comprising
 - a first body side liner,
 - a first back sheet,
 - a first absorbent body positioned between the first body side liner and the first back sheet wherein the first absorbent body includes a first opening and defines a first absorbent body length,
 - the first opening having a first opening length that is at least 50% the first absorbent body length and defining
 - a first opening area,
 - a first opening shape,
 - an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width,
 - a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and
 - a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width, wherein the median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width,
 - a second absorbent article comprising
 - a second body side liner,
 - a second back sheet,
 - a second absorbent body positioned between the second body side liner and the second back sheet wherein the second absorbent body includes a second opening and defines a second absorbent body length,
 - the second opening having a second opening length that is at least 50% the second absorbent body length and defining
 - a second opening area,
 - a second opening shape,
 - an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width,
 - a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and

a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width, wherein the median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width,

wherein the first absorbent body length is at least 10% greater than the second absorbent body length and wherein the first opening shape is substantially the same as the second opening shape.

18. The array of **claim 17** wherein the first absorbent body includes a first absorbent body peripheral edge that defines a first absorbent body shape and the second absorbent body includes a second absorbent body peripheral edge that defines a second absorbent body shape that is different than the first absorbent body shape.

19. The array of **claim 17** further comprising a third absorbent article, the third absorbent article comprising,

a third body side liner,

a third back sheet,

a third absorbent body positioned between the third body side liner and the third back sheet, and

a body conforming structure positioned in direct facing relation with the third body side liner, wherein the body conforming structure is aligned with a longitudinal centerline of the absorbent article and wherein the body conforming structure defines

an anterior portion having a median anterior portion width,

a posterior portion having a median posterior portion width, and

a central portion positioned between the anterior portion and the posterior portion and having a median central portion width, wherein the median anterior portion width is greater than the median central portion width and the median central portion width is greater than the median posterior portion width, and

wherein the body conforming structure includes a peripheral edge that defines a body conforming shape that is substantially the same as the first opening shape and the second opening shape.

20. The array of **claim 19** wherein the third absorbent body defines a third absorbent body length and the body conforming structure defines a body conforming structure length that is at least 50% the third absorbent body length.

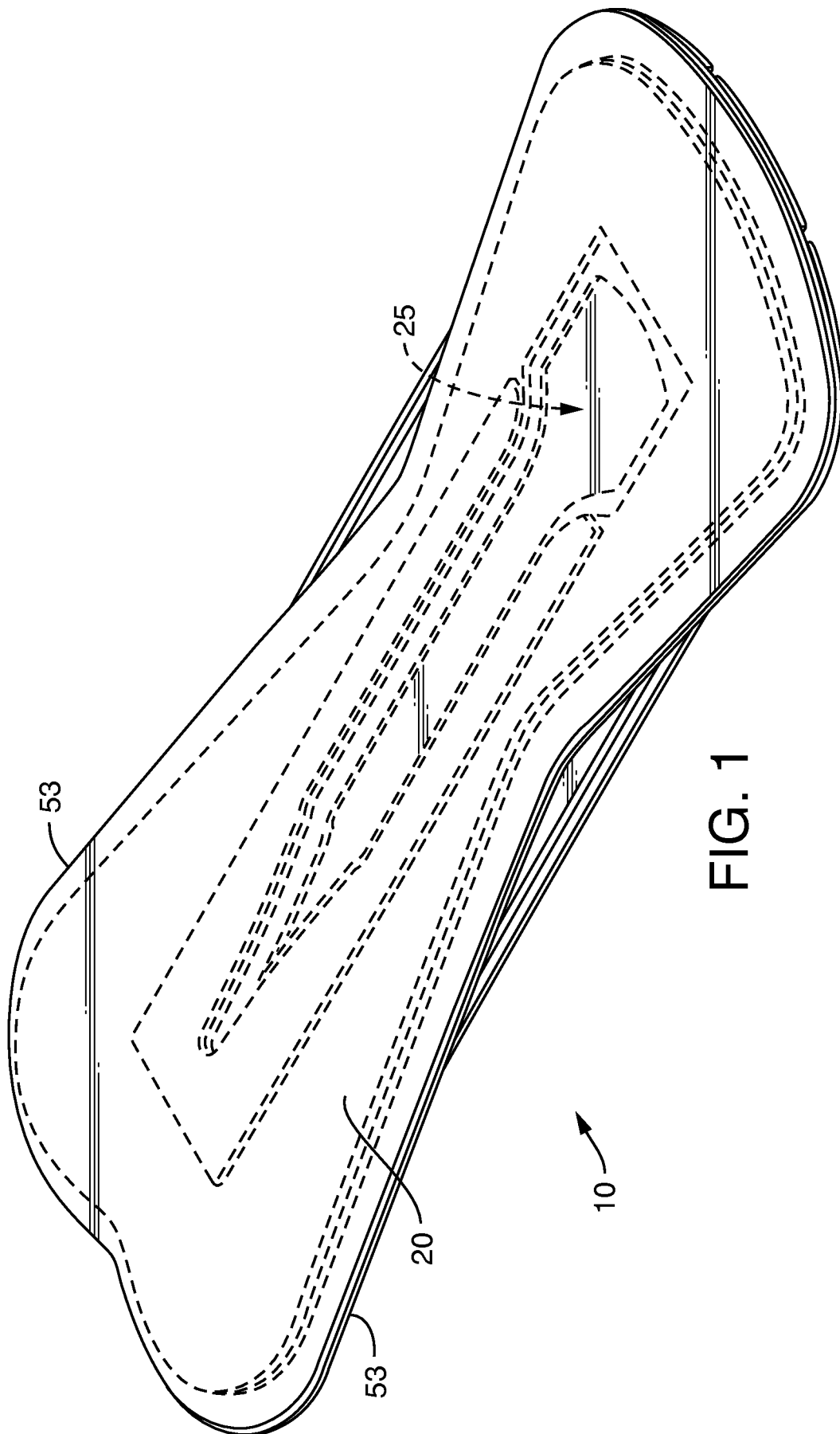


FIG. 1

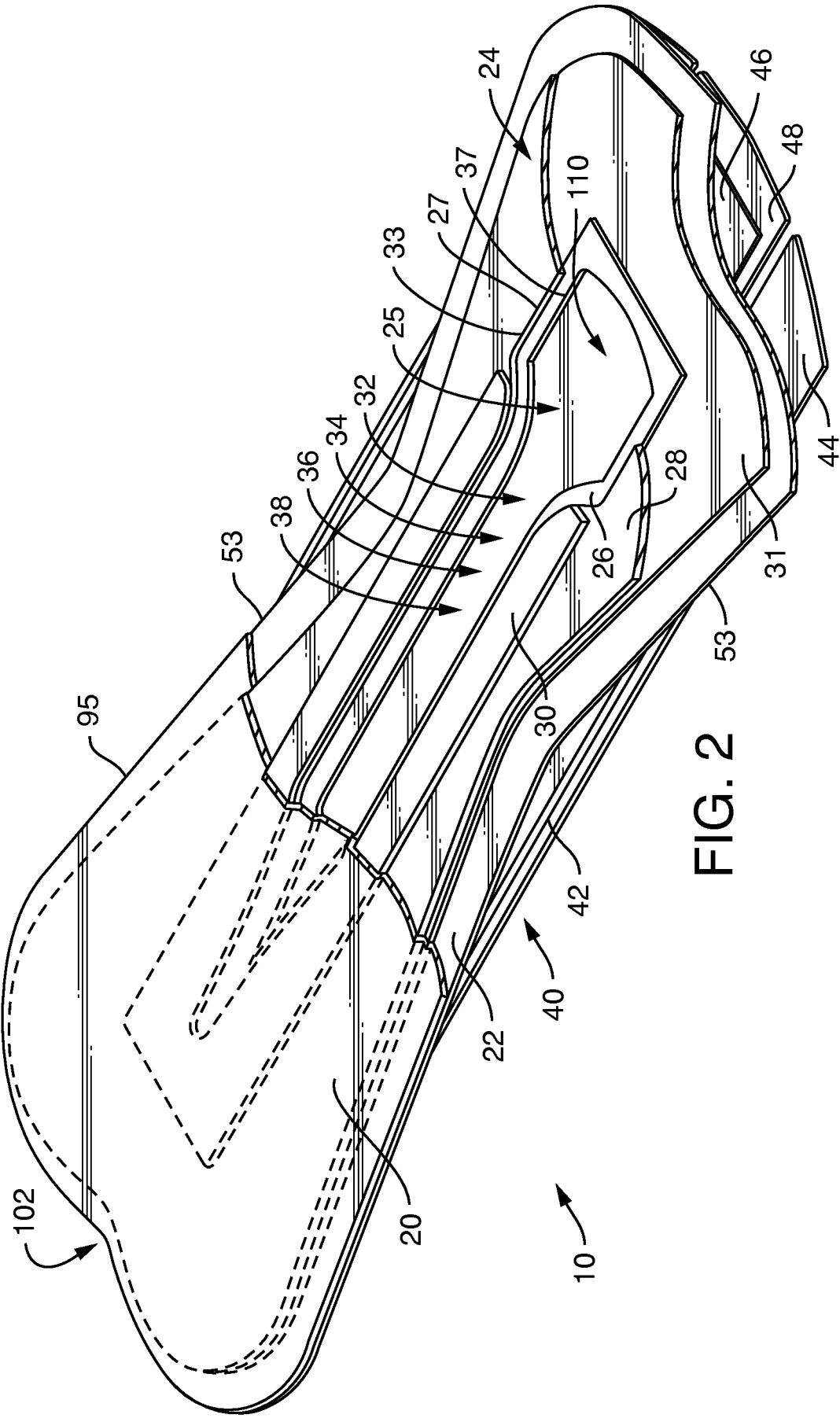


FIG. 2

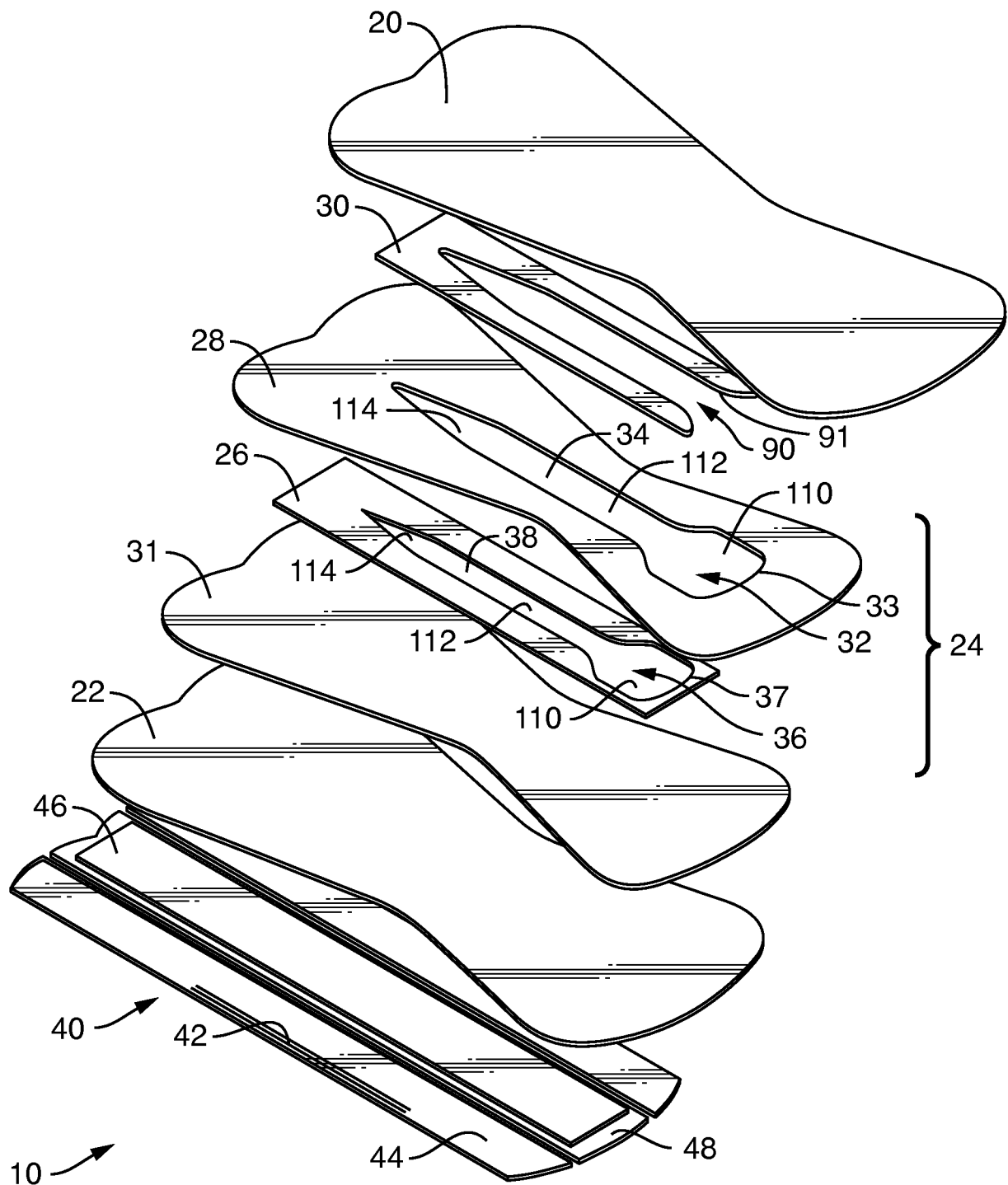


FIG. 3

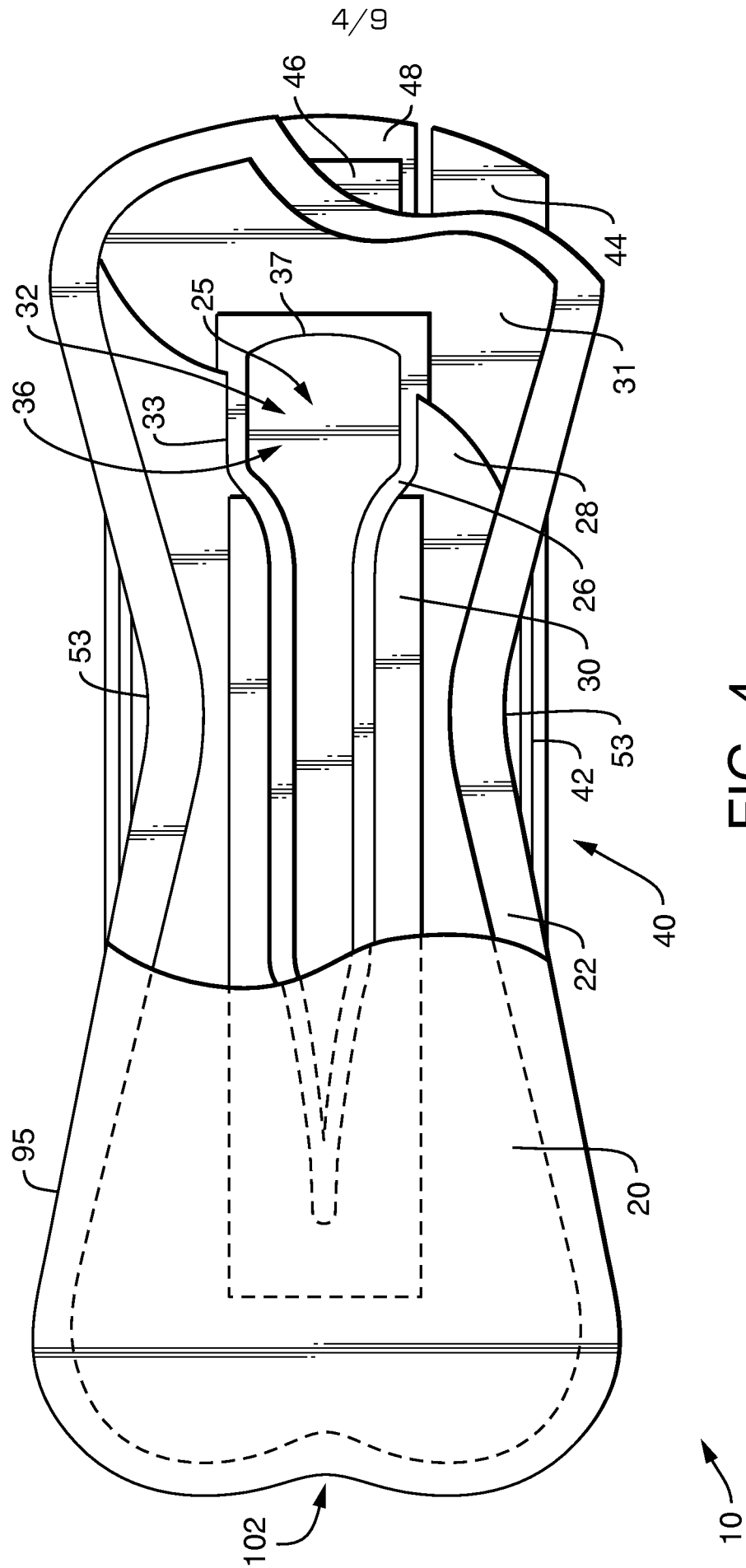


FIG. 4

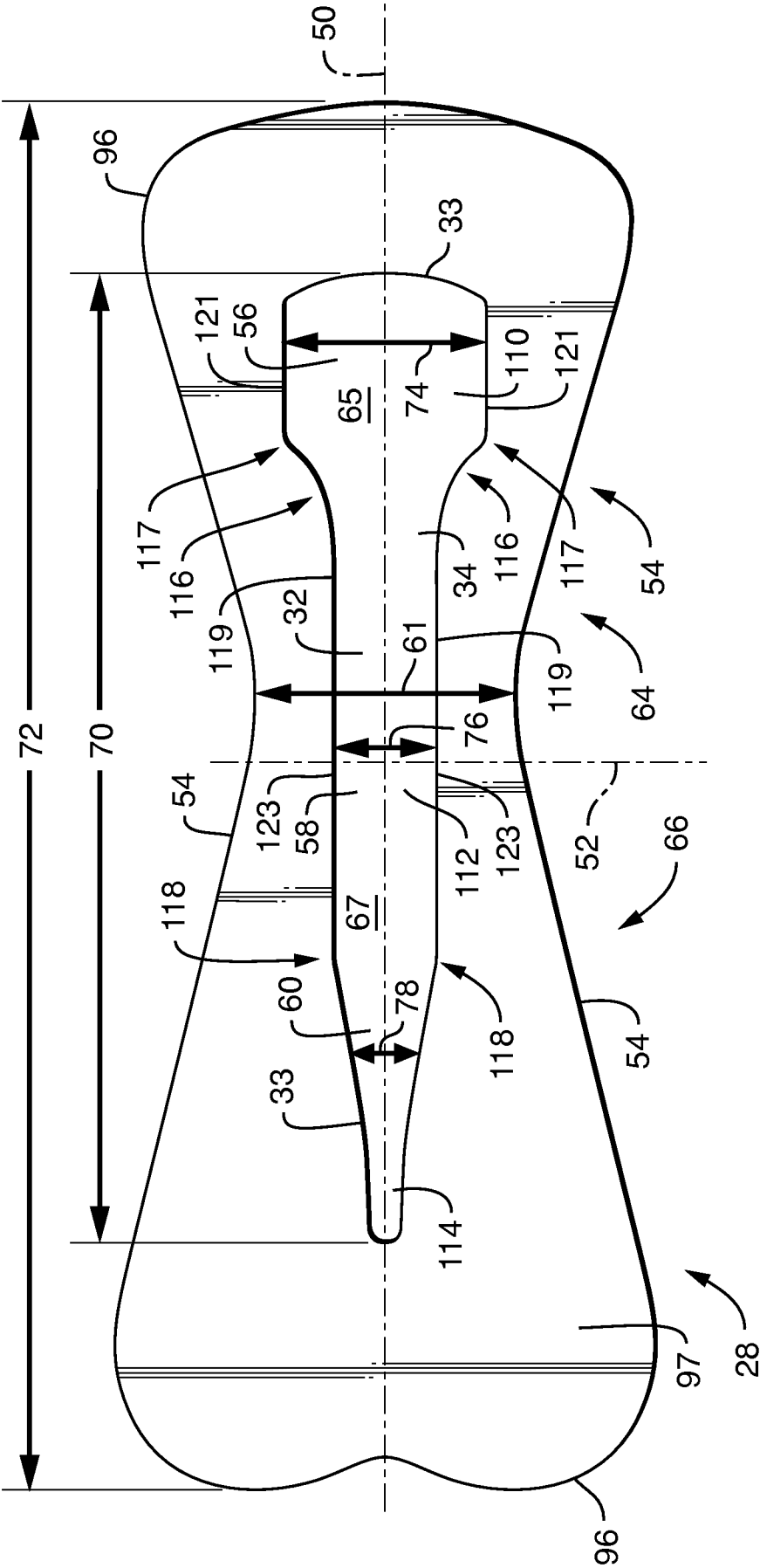


FIG. 5

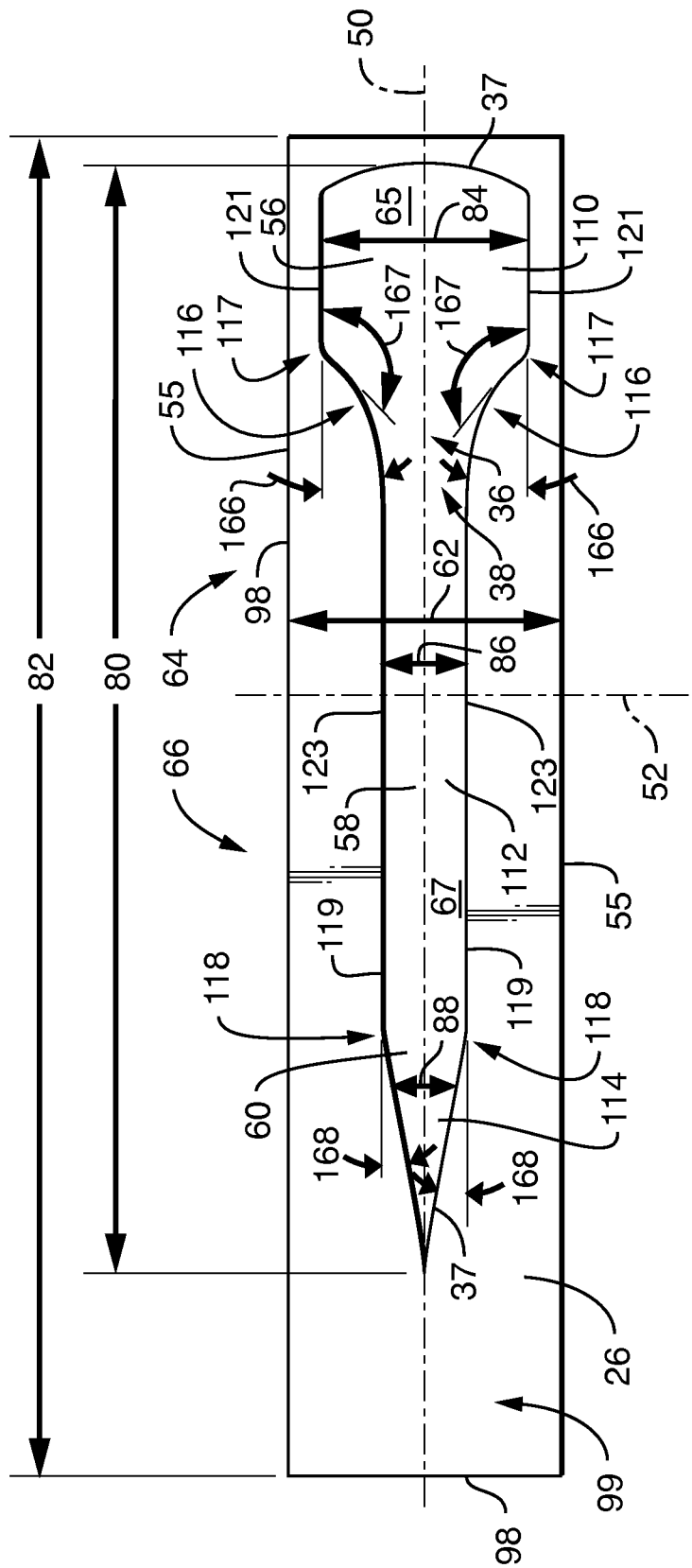


FIG. 6

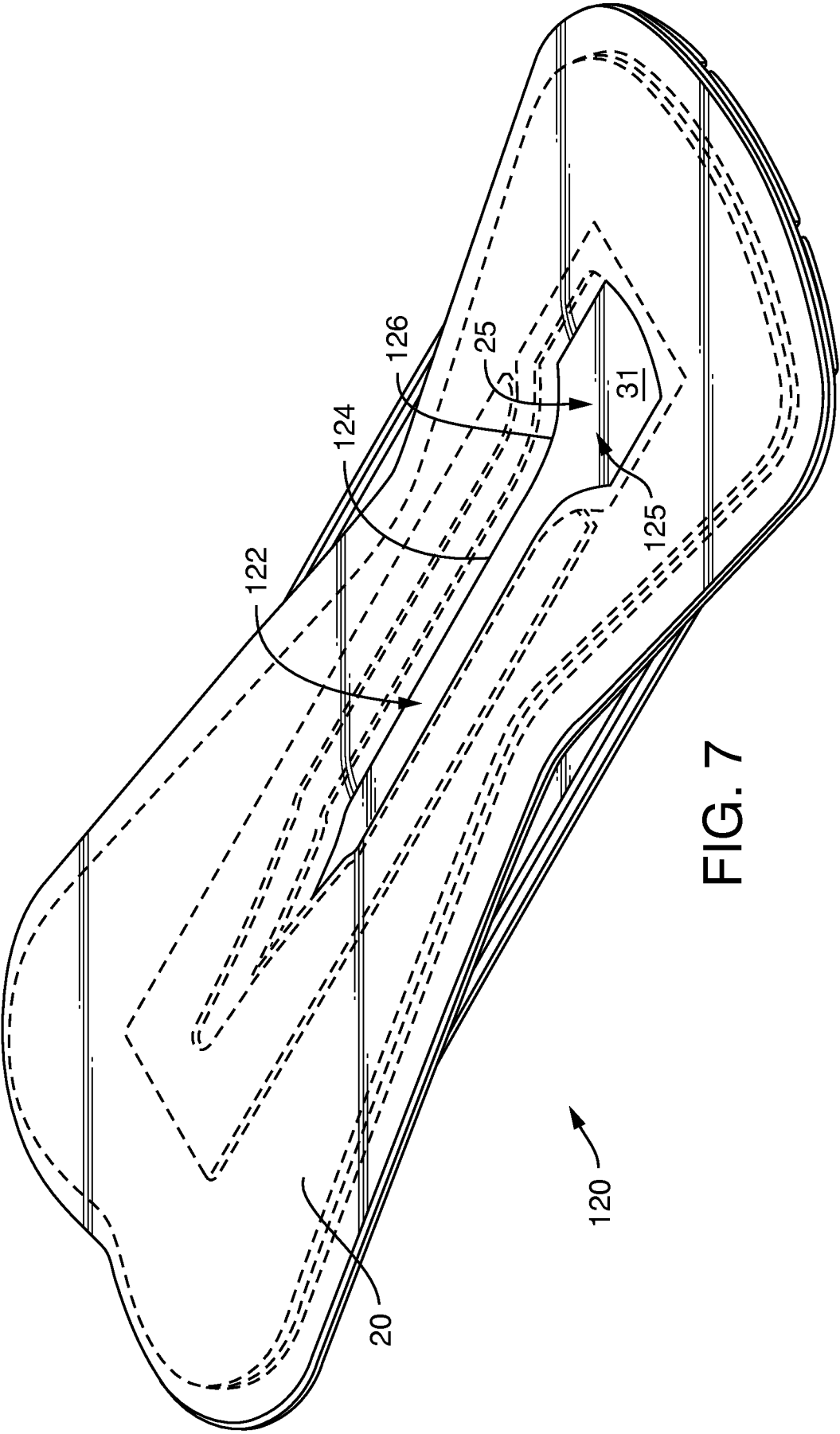


FIG. 7

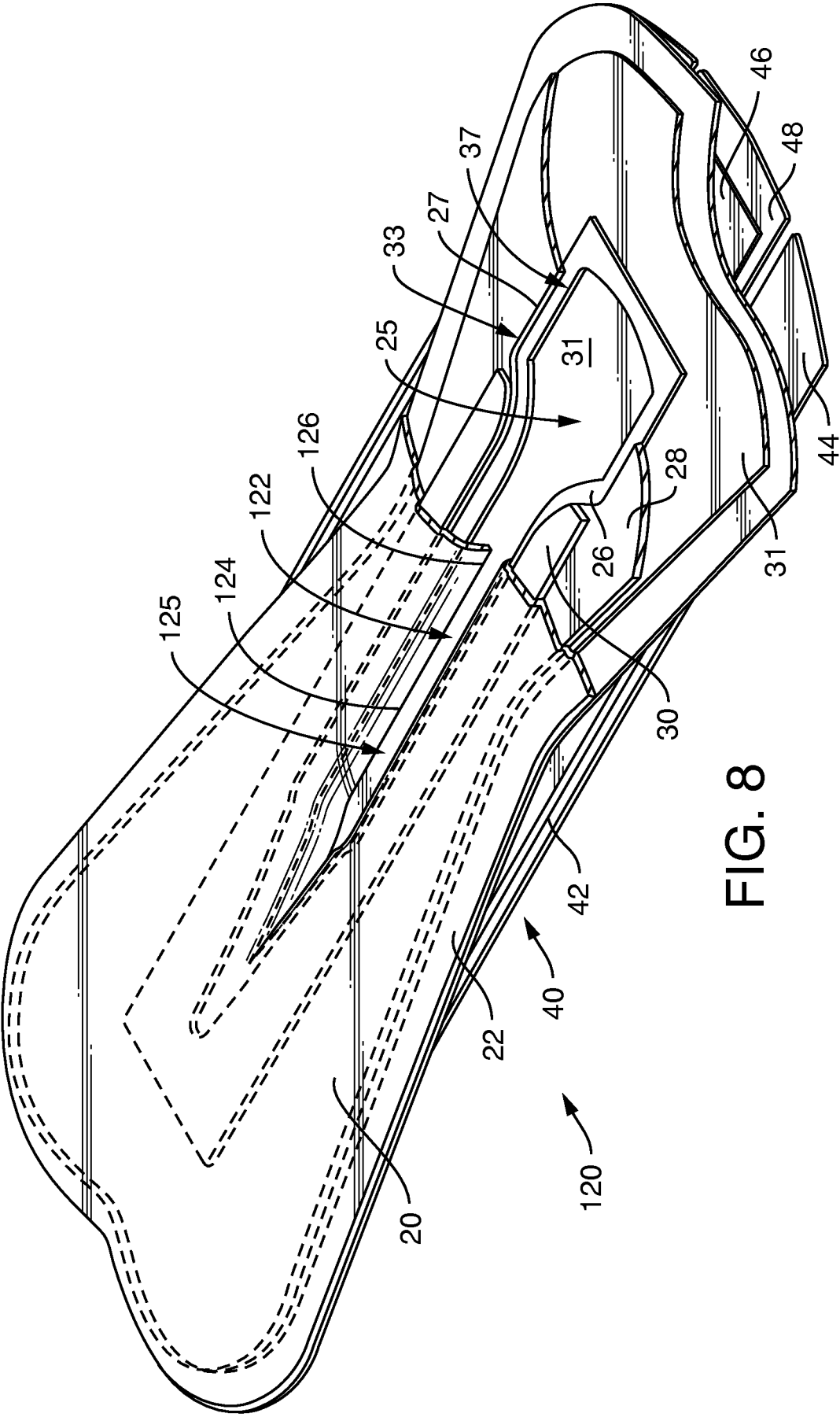
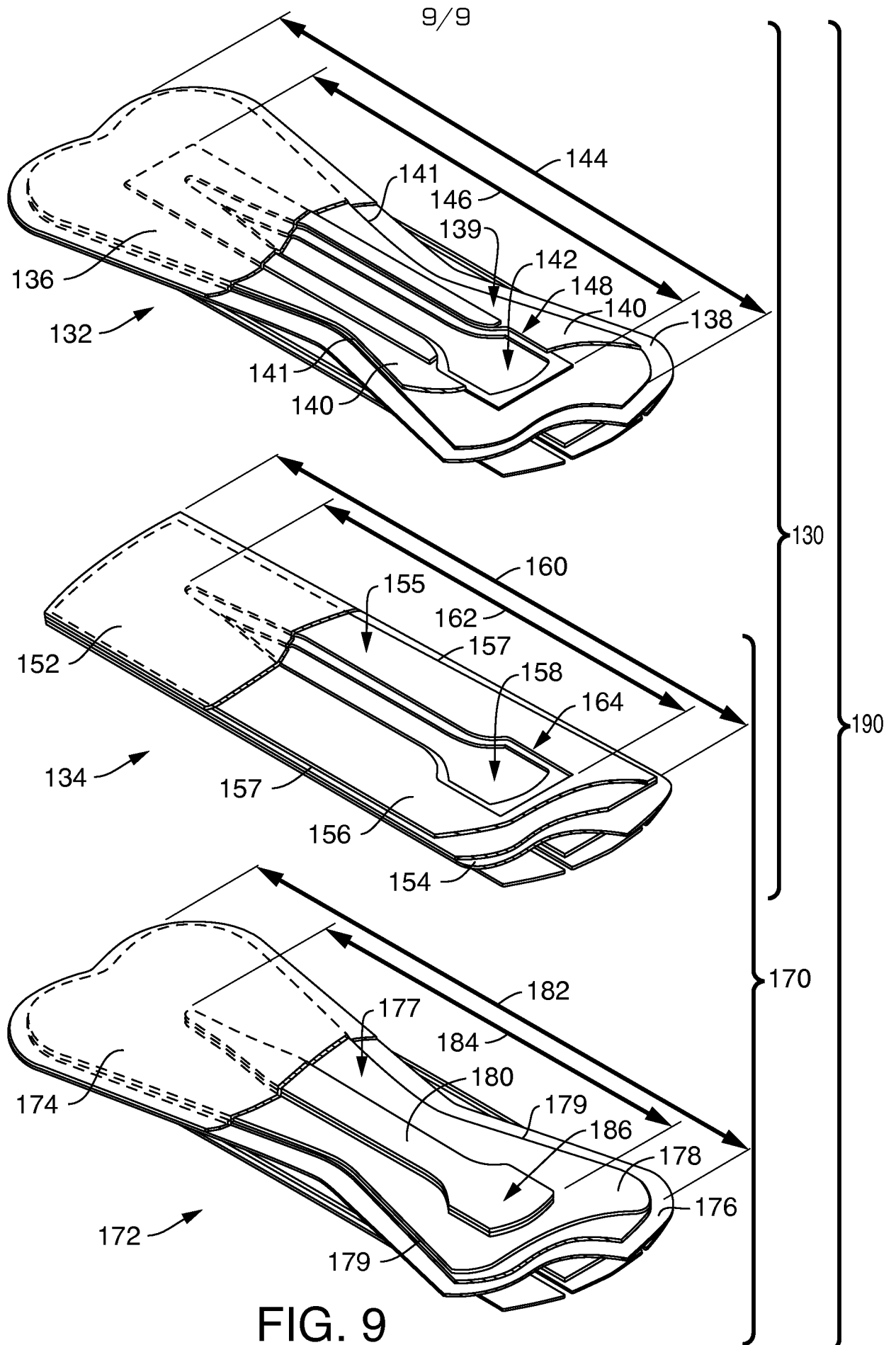


FIG. 8



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/IB2013/051070**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER****A61F 13/472(2006.01)i, A61F 13/47(2006.01)i, A61F 13/53(2006.01)i**

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

A61F 13/472; A61F 13/15; A61F 5/44; A61F 13/16; D21J 3/00; A61F 13/20; A61F 13/53

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Korean utility models and applications for utility models

Japanese utility models and applications for utility models

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

eKOMPASS(KIPO internal) & Keywords: , ,

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	EP 0223487 A2 (PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY) 27 May 1987 See abstract; figure 2; column 6 lines 17-21; column 6 lines 29-36; and claim 1.	1-20
A	US 5810798 A (FINCH, V. V. et al.) 22 September 1998 See abstract; figure 2; column 5 lines 45-67; and claim 1.	1-20
A	US 2005-0010185 A1 (MIZUTANI, S. et al.) 13 January 2005 See abstract; figure 1; paragraph [0021]; and claim 1.	1-20
A	US 2012-0037327 A1 (ALKMIN, M. A. et al.) 16 February 2012 See abstract; figure 24; and paragraph [0077].	1-20
A	US 4475913 A (HLABAN, J. J.) 9 October 1984 See abstract; figures 1-2; and claim 1.	1-20



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



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Date of the actual completion of the international search

17 July 2013 (17.07.2013)

Date of mailing of the international search report

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

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