



May 31, 2024

Dear Representative:

We are writing as a group of more than 30 patient, healthcare professional, and industry organizations to request that you cosponsor bipartisan legislation H.R. 7829, the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act. The SOAR Act, sponsored by Representatives David Valadao (R-CA), Larry Bucshon (R-IN), Adrian Smith (R-NE) and Julia Brownley (D-CA), will ensure individuals enrolled in Medicare who require supplemental oxygen have appropriate access to this life-giving treatment. This legislation is critical to the lives of over 1.5 million Americans who are facing serious health risks because they do not currently have access to the appropriate supplemental oxygen equipment and services.

Since 2011, supplemental oxygen has been part of Medicare's DMEPOS Competitive Bidding Program, resulting in significant decreases in payments for oxygen equipment and supplies. While we appreciate that payment reductions have produced Medicare savings, they have come at the unacceptable cost of access to medically necessary oxygen equipment, supplies, and services for people who require supplemental oxygen. Given the inadequate Medicare reimbursement rates, many individuals who require supplemental oxygen do not receive the types of oxygen systems that are needed. The Medicare program also does not reimburse for the services of respiratory therapists, which are often necessary – especially when they are given a new oxygen prescription – to support individuals' care. Due to inadequate oxygen access and services, these individuals are at high risk for worsening health, avoidable emergency room visits, and hospitalizations.

The SOAR Act would remove all oxygen services and equipment from the competitive bidding reimbursement system and create a new reimbursement system for this benefit. It will add a payment for respiratory therapy services to ensure individuals who use supplemental oxygen have the necessary training on using oxygen, establish an oxygen users' bill of rights, and establish national standardized documentation requirements that rely on a template rather than prescriber medical records.

Individuals with the most significant oxygen needs cannot use small, portable oxygen concentrators (known as POCs) because they do not provide high flow rates. Instead, these people are currently dependent on large tanks of compressed, gaseous oxygen. These large tanks of oxygen are heavy, bulky, and may provide only a couple of hours of oxygen at a time. People who have any sort of mobility issues struggle to get around with even one of these large tanks. Consequently, those individuals who need high flow rates often end up effectively housebound.

The SOAR Act would bring significant health and well-being benefits to the 1.5 million individuals living with COPD, heart disease, pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary fibrosis, people awaiting lung transplants and other advanced respiratory diseases who rely on supplemental oxygen. Oxygen therapy can decrease mortality, reduce shortness of breath, and increase exercise capacity. We request that you cosponsor the SOAR Act (H.R. 7829) and urge the legislation be passed in 2024.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Allergy and Asthma Network  
Alpha-1 Foundation  
American Academy of Sleep Medicine  
American Association for Respiratory Care  
American Association of Cardiovascular and  
Pulmonary Rehabilitation  
American College of Chest Physicians  
American Lung Association  
American Physical Therapy Association  
American Thoracic Society  
ARDS Alliance, Inc.  
APTA Academy of Cardiovascular &  
Pulmonary Physical Therapy  
Children's Interstitial and Diffuse Lung  
Disease (chILD) Foundation  
COPD Foundation  
The Council for Quality Respiratory Care  
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute  
Dorney-Koppel Foundation  
Foundation for Sarcoidosis Research  
The LAM Foundation  
National Scleroderma Foundation  
NTM Info and Research  
The PAP Foundation  
Patients Rising  
PCD Foundation  
PF Warriors  
Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation  
Pulmonary Hypertension Association  
Respiratory Health Association  
Running On Air  
TSC Alliance  
VGM & Associates  
Wescoe Foundation for Pulmonary Fibrosis