

Dear (Place Senator's name here):

I am writing to ask you to cosponsor bipartisan legislation S. 3821, the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act.

The SOAR Act, sponsored by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA), 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 more than 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.

(If you have a personal story about why you, or someone you love, is one of those 1.5 million people, you could insert it here.)

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. This may have generated Medicare savings, but at too high a cost.

The Medicare program also does not reimburse for the services of respiratory therapists, which are often necessary – especially when we patients are given a new oxygen prescription – to support 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, and 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, Hermansky-Pudlak Syndrome, 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. I request that you cosponsor the SOAR Act (S. 3821) and urge the legislation be passed in 2024. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,