

People with chronic lung disease who use supplemental oxygen should be able to travel by airplane without the incredible expense and inconvenience they endure today. I have escorted at least a dozen groups of oxygen users on cruises to places from Hawaii to England and have run into an unnecessary number of problems, mainly from airline representatives not being sensitive to the passengers needs. One lady, who had confirmed her oxygen order at least three times, was not allowed to board because the agent told her the oxygen had not been ordered. Turns out if she scrolled a little further down on her screen, she would have seen the order. These incidents can not keep occurring.

There are over one million people in the United States who use continuous supplementary oxygen due to chronic respiratory diseases. These citizens would like to be able to travel by air, with what we feel, are reasonable and safe accommodations. The present system prevents us from realizing this goal. The airlines have made it difficult, costly and often times simply refuse to allow oxygen users onboard their aircraft.

All airlines, regardless of the size of the plane, should be required to:

- Allow portable oxygen concentrators, as well as ventilators, respirators and continuous positive airway pressure machines on all flights after completion of the required safety and security testing (which should take no longer than 120 days.)
- Allow people using these devices to bring extra batteries that are protected from short circuit problems and packaged to protect them from physical harm.
- Give priority access to seating with electrical outlets and allow the users to plug the devices into the outlet.
- Allow the passenger to walk in the plane with their oxygen supply.
- Not assess a charge to the oxygen-using passenger who is using their own portable oxygen concentrator.

The oxygen user will of course, agree to all security testing when bringing the equipment on the plane and notify the airlines prior to the flight of the plans to use the respiratory units, along with presenting their physician's order requiring them to do so.

Using a portable oxygen concentrator will allow the passenger to be independent and safely in control of their own medical needs from the time they leave their home to travel to the airport, wait to board the plane, during flight, leaving the airport and during transport to their visiting destination. The Department of Transportation should finalize and implement this rule as soon as possible.