



NHOPA NEWS

National Home Oxygen Patients Association

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New DOT Ruling Making it Easier to Fly with Oxygen

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) recently passed a new ruling that will make flying with oxygen easier. **The new ruling states that airlines must accept certain approved portable oxygen concentrators (POCs) onboard flights.** NHOPA played a large part in getting this ruling passed along with other organizations throughout the U.S.

Senators Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Blanche Lincoln (D-Arkansas) were instrumental in getting the new ruling passed. Their offices jointly released a press release reprinted here in part. NHOPA's President Jon Tiger is quoted in the press release.

Senators Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Blanche Lincoln (D-Arkansas) today scored a victory for airline passengers who are reliant on portable oxygen when traveling. A federal rule change requires airlines to allow all passengers needing portable oxygen access to aircraft. Prior to the new ruling, portable oxygen containers were designated as a permissible carry-on item, but airlines were still permitted to deny passengers carrying these containers. The new announcement from the U.S. Department of Transportation now clears the way for all travelers who need to do so to use portable oxygen.

Crapo and Lincoln, along with Representatives John Lewis (D-Georgia) and Cliff Stearns (R-Florida), founded the Congressional COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Caucus to increase congressional awareness and education opportunities regarding COPD.

Jon Tiger, President of the National Home Oxygen Patients Association, and Peter Gay, M.D., President of the National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care released a joint statement: "This decision by the Department of Transportation has been worth the wait. It moves the one million Americans who require supplementary oxygen during flight from second class status to genuine first class status as members of the flying public who can fly with relative ease. No longer are arbitrary barriers in place for these passengers, and they can now assume responsibility for their own travel. This decision would not have happened without the strong Congressional leadership of Senator Mike Crapo and the Congressional COPD Caucus that has also championed this cause. On behalf of oxygen users and the pulmonary physicians who manage their care, we are especially grateful."

The portion of the rule pertaining to U.S. carriers as stated in the *Federal Register* reads "This rule *requires* U.S. carriers to permit individuals to use electronic respiratory assistive devices in the passenger cabin so long as the devices have been tested and labeled by their manufacturer(s) as meeting the applicable FAA requirements for medical portable electronic devices as described in FAA Advisory Circular No. 91.21-1B (the FAA-approved POCs would also be subject to the requirements of Special Federal Aviation Regulation 106) and the device can be stowed consistent with FAA cabin safety requirements."

The rule will apply to U.S. air carriers worldwide and to foreign air carriers whose flights begin or end in the U.S. **The new rule takes effect in one year** to give airlines time for implementation.

(cont'd pg 2)

Once fully implemented in May 2009, the key parts of the new rule include:

- A requirement that airlines permit passengers to bring approved POCs on board.
- Airlines may require up to 48 hours notice for travel, and passenger check in is required one hour prior to normal check in time.
- Passengers with POCs will be required to have fully charged batteries lasting 1½ times the duration of the flight. If the flight is scheduled to take off at 1 pm and arrive at 3 pm, the passenger must have at least 3 hours of battery life in order to board the plane.
- Manufacturers of POCs will be required to affix labels on devices that meet FAA flight standards. If no label is affixed, the airline will likely deny boarding.
- Seat proximity to the plane's electrical power source is not assured or required.

The final rule can be read in its entirety at <http://www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main?main=DocketDetail&d=DOT-OST-2004-19482> or www.federalregister.gov. This ruling was released on Tuesday May 13, 2008.

Look for future newsletters to include more detailed passenger information concerning this

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The National Home Oxygen Patients Association is devoted exclusively to improving the lives of people across the country who require supplementary oxygen on a regular basis.

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new ruling.

FAA currently approved concentrators for use aboard aircraft are:

- AirSep FreeStyle
- AirSep LifeStyle
- Inogen One
- Respironics EverGo
- Sequal Eclipse

Thanks to all who helped to make this effort a reality!

Update from the Hill Competitive Bidding

The potential effect of Phase I of Competitive Bidding is being felt and NHOPA is beginning to hear feedback from patients on their experiences. In the April NHOPA Newsletter Phil Porte of NHOPA's Executive Office outlined several scenarios that may occur with the roll out of Phase I. If problems arise, you would like to relate to the appropriate people first let your congressional representatives know. Contact NHOPA's Executive Office (1-888-646-7244) for further information on government contact.

EFFORTS Founder

Efforts Founder Gary Bain recently passed away. Gary was the main engine of EFFORTS (Emphysema Foundation For Our Right to Survive) since its establishment in 1997. He made a significant impact within the COPD community. NHOPA's thoughts go out to the Bain family and the members of EFFORTS.

Feedback from YOU!

Edna Fiore of the Colorado COPD Coalition reminded us of the COPDGene™ research study. This study, conducted through National Jewish Medical and Research Center, is looking at inherited factors that may put some people at a higher risk to develop COPD. A group of doctors and scientists throughout the U.S is conducting the study and their plan is to enroll over 10,000 people. According to information Edna sent the study is "currently enrolling people throughout the United States . . . To participate you must be between the ages of 45 and 80, a non-Hispanic White or African American, and a

current or former smoker. If you are eligible for the study you will be able to have a free lung function test and CT scan. You will also fill out questionnaires about your health and physical function and have blood drawn.”

The website (www.COPDgene.org) states “It has been proven that cigarette smoking causes COPD; however, only 25% of smokers develop COPD. We want to learn why some smokers get COPD and others do not.”

For more information on this study or to find a center near you visit www.COPDgene.org or email COPDStudy@njc.org. The COPD Foundation can be contacted toll-free at 1-866-316-COPD (2673) for more information on this important study.

“Your involvement could lead to better diagnosis and treatment for millions of people affected by COPD around the world.”

Edna thanks for this important reminder!

Inhaler Discontinued

King Pharmaceuticals issued a press release informing the public that it has decided to discontinue the manufacture of Tilade® Inhaler (nedocromil sodium).

The release states that this decision was “based upon many factors, including our inability to identify a qualified manufacturer for chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) propellant inhaler. Tilade® will remain available through pharmacies and wholesalers until current supplies are depleted.”

If you are currently taking Tilade, contact your physician regarding any medication changes that you may have to make in the future.

New Products/Services

The following information on new products/companies available on the market is for informational purposes only. NHOPA does not specifically endorse ANY products. Contact your physician for further information regarding your healthcare or the specific company for product information.

Roxlyn Cole sent information on a new service - Mobility Air Transport. This non-profit organization offers hassle free flying. “The goal is simple: making air travel easier for people with disabilities. Mobility Air Transport, a

nonprofit organization, was formed to make flying more accessible, convenient, and comfortable for persons using wheelchairs and other assistive devices. Starting this spring, flights are available throughout the US (except Hawaii) Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

Mobility Air uses business jets and corporate planes made accessible to accommodate people using wheelchairs, assist animals, ventilators oxygen tanks and other medical equipment. The modified crafts are roomy enough to transport up to five travel companions, too.

Mobility Air Transport flies in and out of smaller airports so travelers can avoid parking issues, shuttle hassles, luggage checking, screening problems and breaking down wheelchairs for cargo. Passengers using wheelchairs can remain in them during the flight or transfer to a seat. And no layovers or connecting flights. Fares are **equal to commercial airline coach rates** and unlike chartered planes, travelers are charged per seat. A minimum two-ticket purchase is required. Flights are made according to the passenger's schedule, even on short term notice.”

For more information on this company, visit their website at www.iflymat.org

Roxlyn thanks for sending us this valuable information!

Our friends from the **Pulmonary Paper** made us aware of Sequal's latest addition to their portable oxygen concentrator (POC) arsenal – the **Eclipse 2 with AutoSAT™ technology**. As with the original Eclipse unit, the Eclipse 2 is the only POC that offers continuous and pulse delivery. The updated Eclipse 2 incorporates AutoSAT™ technology, which according to the website, offers “adjustable sensitivity for consistent FIO₂ at higher breath rates.” More information on this new unit can be found at www.sequal.com or by calling 1-800-826-4610.

Nonin Medical recently unveiled the recent addition to their pulse oximetry line - the **Onyx II, Model 9560**. Nonin's website states that this fingertip pulse oximeter incorporates Bluetooth wireless technology and allows patients to “take readings outside of the home and transmit the time-stamped data once they return. (*cont'd pg 4*)

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Membership renewal forms will be in the mail soon!

Make sure you send your dues in so that you do not miss a single issue of the *NHOPA Newsletter!*

New User Exchange Directories

For those members that returned their information to be included in the latest User-to-User Exchange Directory, they will be in your mailbox in the near future. This exchange directory is only mailed to those members that requested to be included and is not sent to corporate members. If you wish to be included in the next Directory, contact the NHOPA Executive Office for information.

New Products *(cont'd from pg 3)*

The Onyx II 9560's memory storage provides up to a minimum of 20 single point measurements." The unit has a power saver feature that "unlike traditional Bluetooth devices, the Onyx II 9560 has a new power saving feature that automatically adjusts transmitted power based on distance from the main unit. This unique feature allows for approximately 600 spot checks on 2 AAA batteries."

More information on this unit can be found at www.nonin.com or at 1.800.356.8874.

Comments & Questions

Tillie Vecchia wrote us with the following comment "I pay for oxygen to be put under my seat when traveling to Florida; by plane, not a problem. However, I can only fly on airlines non-stop from Boston to Miami non-stop. All other airlines do not have direct flights from Boston to Florida, is that true? I live 10 minutes from West Palm Beach airport, but have to fly to Miami which is 1 hour away. Any info?"

Tillie thanks for your question. We hope that the information contained in this newsletter helps you fly easier. The recent ruling by the DOT, taking effect in one year that will allow oxygen users to fly on all U.S. airlines with POCs should make it easier to get from one destination to another. Until that time you might want to check out the new company Mobility Air Transport and see what they can offer you in the way of a direct flight from West Palm Beach to Miami. Good luck!

◆ **For up-to-date information and membership applications go to www.homeoxygen.org** ◆