

**Statement from the COPD Foundation****House Energy & Commerce Subcommittee on Health Hearing:****Legislative Proposals to Support Patient Access to Medicare Services****January 8, 2026**

Chairman Guthrie, Chairman Griffith, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the COPD Foundation (COPDF), we thank you for convening today's hearing exploring a wide array of bipartisan legislation in support of patient access to Medicare services. We are grateful for the Committee's focus on strengthening the Medicare program to sustain and enhance seniors' access to care.

COPDF is a 501(c)3 nonprofit with the mission of helping millions of people live longer and healthier lives by advancing research, advocacy, and awareness to stop chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis, and NTM lung disease. It is estimated that 30 million Americans live with COPD. COPD was the fourth leading cause of death by chronic disease in 2022 and costs America between \$40 - \$70 billion annually.<sup>1</sup>

Access to supplemental oxygen is a priority to the lung health community. Over 1.5 million Americans rely on supplemental oxygen due to a variety of factors such as lung or heart health conditions. However, the health and wellbeing of those relying on supplemental oxygen are threatened due to access barriers to medically-appropriate oxygen therapy. These obstacles are largely caused by an inadequate Medicare reimbursement system and lack of access to the skills respiratory therapists can provide to oxygen-dependent patients. The Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act (H.R.2902) would help address these issues and is critical to ensuring quality of life for this population.

The SOAR Act addresses long-standing barriers to access in several critical ways. It would lock in savings by removing oxygen services and equipment from the competitive bidding reimbursement program (CBP); create a new reimbursement system to ensure everyone who needs supplemental oxygen can get the kind and amount they need; ensure people who need respiratory therapy services can access them; and establish an oxygen user's bill of rights. It would also protect against fraud and abuse by mandating standardized documentation requirements.

While the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has engaged in rulemaking for the CBP, the final rule does not address any of the issues the SOAR Act seeks to resolve. Congressional action remains the most prudent path to restoring reliable access to liquid oxygen

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.copdfoundation.org/What-is-COPD/Understanding-COPD/Statistics.aspx>

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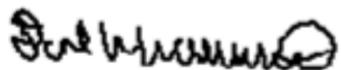
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and ensuring patients receive the appropriate modality of supplemental oxygen they need to breathe and live independent and full lives.

The SOAR Act would bring significant health and well-being benefits to the 1.5 million individuals in the U.S. who rely on supplemental oxygen, including those with COPD. We urge you to support the SOAR Act as Americans who rely on supplemental oxygen cannot wait. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



David Mannino, MD

Chief Medical Officer

COPD Foundation