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Oxygen Patients Cleared for Takeoff

FAA Allows New Oxygen Device Onboard Commercial Aircraft
Decision Improves Access to Air Travel for Oxygen Patients

WASHINGTON (7-13-05) – Good news for the more than 1 million Americans who need oxygen therapy: airline travel just got easier. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) today issued a rule allowing the use of a new oxygen device called a Portable Oxygen Concentrator (POC) onboard commercial aircraft <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/pdf/05-13664.pdf>. Approved POC devices include the Inogen One, manufactured by Santa Barbara, Calif.-based Inogen, a medical device company.

The rule, classified as a Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR), becomes effective August 11th, 2005 and is the end result of years of hard work by the entire respiratory homecare industry to bring awareness to flying with supplemental oxygen.

For oxygen patients like Tony Kanzia of Skokie, Ill., the FAA decision and access to POC devices is the opportunity to feel normal again. “This is a wonderful thing. It’s the best news in quite awhile as it will let a lot of people fly. We want to live. When the ruling goes into effect, I will go to any airport and go standby to somewhere, just to do it, because I can do it,” says Kanzia.

Adds Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID), a vocal supporter of the POC issue, “ I commend the FAA for putting out this final rule. It allows millions of Americans suffering from COPD and other diseases to take to the skies unburdened with the current onerous regulations and cost. I strongly urge the major airlines to immediately respect this large population of potential air travelers and permit these POCs onboard.”

Unlike conventional oxygen tanks which are heavy and store oxygen in a pressurized cylinder, the Inogen One filters nitrogen from existing air to deliver a therapeutic concentration of oxygen to the user. The Inogen One is small in size, very lightweight (less than 10 pounds) and fits easily underneath airline passenger seats. The Inogen One is powered by batteries similar to those used in laptop computers or may be plugged into a power outlet.

“POC devices like the Inogen One are safe, quiet and efficient. They have undergone extensive testing to ensure they do not interfere with aircraft procedures during takeoff, in the air or at landing, nor should their operation disrupt other passengers” said Kathy Odell, Inogen CEO. “What they do provide is worry-free travel for oxygen patients,” she added.

Prior to the ruling, airline travel for oxygen patients was expensive, difficult to arrange, and nerve racking. Patients were not allowed to bring oxygen tanks onboard aircraft, and not every airline rented oxygen tanks to passengers. Those that did often charged prices equal to the cost of an additional seat. Flight layovers required careful coordination with home healthcare providers to ensure uninterrupted availability of oxygen – and there remained the constant worry about delays, inclement weather or aircraft trouble which could increase the margin for error. For many, this process made air travel unrealistic.

The FAA rule now offers oxygen users new hope. Odell concluded, “The Inogen One is the one solution for home, away, and now travel. Inogen is proud to do its part to enable oxygen users to achieve their independence and fly with oxygen without hassle or worry. This is a great day for oxygen users.”

Federal law restricts the Inogen One to sale by or on the order of a physician.

About Oxygen Users

The majority of oxygen users suffer from a disorder called Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). COPD is a group of long-term, irreversible diseases that make it difficult to breathe because air does not flow easily out of the lungs. Over time, COPD worsens and may lead to severe shortness of breath, heart problems and death.

COPD affects an estimated 30 million people in the United States and more than 100 million worldwide. It is currently the fourth leading cause of death behind heart disease, cancer and stroke and, by 2020, COPD is predicted to become the third leading cause of death worldwide.

The two diseases most often associated with COPD are chronic bronchitis and emphysema. These are both believed to be caused by smoking tobacco. Other lung irritants that are inhaled over a long period of time - such as secondhand smoke, air pollution, industrial dust, and chemical fumes - are believed to contribute to COPD.

Inogen is innovation in oxygen therapy. With a team of known leaders in the provider industry, deep experience in medical devices, talented engineers and associates each committed to revolutionizing oxygen therapy, our vision is to develop innovative, cost effective respiratory home healthcare equipment that improves quality of life for patients and bottom line profits for providers. And we are proud to introduce our first commitment to that vision: The Inogen One.

One Solution: The single solution for home and away, for today and tomorrow, for patients and provider.

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