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Administrator Marion Blakey
U.S. Department of Transportation
Room Plaza 401400 Seventh Street, SW.,
Washington, DC 20590-0001

Subject: Docket Number: FAA-2004-18596 - 364

Dear Administrator Blakey:

I urge you to finalize the proposed rule to permit the use of certain portable oxygen concentrator devices on aircraft.

Over one million Americans have medical conditions that require the use of supplemental oxygen to engage in activities of daily living. With appropriate supplemental oxygen, patients can lead full, productive lives. Many patients enjoy all the travel and leisure activities - except airline travel.

Our family traveled to Alaska, and when my father was in need of oxygen just to travel through the airport without assistance (no wheelchair was available), not even on the airline, he was denied boarding on the plane without a physician's statement of fitness to travel. Patients in need of oxygen to travel are not adding anything new within the aircraft, as oxygen is already on-board. Passengers requiring oxygen to move independantly throughout the airport should not be resitricted in boarding, particularly when they don't even request or need the oxygen on board the aircraft. Patients needing oxygen on-board should also be allowed access to travel by aircraft.

This proposed rule is a step in the right direction to help passengers that require supplemental oxygen travel easier. However the proposed rule should be strengthened by having the FAA require all airlines to permit the use of FAA-approved portable oxygen concentrators. Please ensure the final rule requires FAA-approved portable oxygen concentrators be allowed on board all civilian air travel and that airline employees are educated as to the need and use of supplemental oxygen.

Sincerely,

Katharine Darst