

## **SOAR ACT INTRODUCTION – A RESPIRATORY CARE TRANSFORMATION BEGINS NOW**

Today, Wednesday, February 28, 2024 Senators Cassidy (R-LA), Warner (D-VA) and Klobuchar (D-MN) introduced the **Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR)** legislation. The legislation is based on the 4 pillars of Medicare oxygen payment reform that the AARC has supported with many others in our broad coalition of patients, providers and the durable medical equipment (DME) industry. The 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar of reform is to create a statutory service element to provide adequate reimbursement for respiratory therapists to ensure patients have access to their expertise. We expect the US House of Representatives to introduce identical legislation in the coming weeks. This legislation represents a major transformation for respiratory care and the care environment for respiratory therapists.

What happens next? While the bill has been dropped into the hopper as they say we will have to wait for it to be formally enrolled and given a designated number. We can begin our advocacy efforts with the Senate by asking Senators to co-sponsor the SOAR Act. You can reach Capitol Hill by calling the switchboard at 202-224-3121 and asking to be transferred to your Senator's office.

The following talking points can help you deliver the message about the importance of the SOAR Act and the need for respiratory therapists to see oxygen patients outside the hospital setting and in their home.

### **Support Medicare Oxygen Payment Reform – PLEASE CO-SPONSOR THE SOAR ACT**

To help fix the problems created by the Medicare Competitive Bidding Program, the AARC has been working with a comprehensive coalition of oxygen stakeholders that includes, providers, patients, and the durable medical equipment industry.

Of great importance to the respiratory care profession the SOAR Act will establish a service benefit to pay respiratory therapists to see oxygen patients outside the care facility and in their home which has never existed before under the durable medical equipment benefit. We ask you to co-sponsor this legislation to ensure anyone who requires supplemental oxygen can access the most appropriate type of oxygen equipment for their needs. Congress must prioritize patients and solve this problem.

The legislation is based on 4 Pillars of reform

1. Ensure supplemental oxygen is patient-centric
2. Ensure access to liquid oxygen for patients for whom it is medically necessary
3. Create a statutory service element to provide adequate reimbursement for respiratory therapists to ensure patients have access to their expertise
4. To ensure predictable and adequate reimbursement and to protect against fraud and abuse, establish national standardized documentation requirements that rely upon a template rather than prescriber medical records to support claims for supplemental oxygen suppliers.