



MILESTONE MEDICAL OXYGEN MEETING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNTRIES TO MAKE RAPID PROGRESS ON ACCESS

10 May 2024

With many millions of patients still suffering from lack of access to pulse oximetry, medical oxygen, and related respiratory therapies – and with the risk of another respiratory pandemic high - the **Lancet Global Health Commission on Medical Oxygen Security** appeals to Member States to act with a sense of urgency when they convene at the **National Oxygen Scale-Up Framework Meeting: Road to Oxygen Access** in Dakar, Senegal, from 14 to 16 May.

The Commission applauds the World Health Organization (WHO) for bringing together governments and their global health partners almost one year after the historic adoption of the first World Health Assembly Resolution on **Increasing Access to Medical Oxygen**. Full implementation of the Resolution will not only accelerate national progress on most of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) for health – as oxygen is vital for managing many infectious and chronic conditions and essential for safe surgery – but will help “pandemic-proof” health systems.

The Commission welcomes the meeting’s focus on the, “*development of costed national plans to increase access to quality assured, affordable medical oxygen systems and personnel to meet the identified needs of all patients,*” (Clause 1:2 of the Resolution). We call on all parties to use this opportunity to advance the development and financing of national oxygen plans in all low- and middle-income countries by 2025, so that by 2030 they are firmly embedded in national health plans, policies, and programs and national pandemic preparedness and response strategies.

We note that the WHO will be presenting a “framework” in Dakar to help countries that do not yet have national oxygen roadmaps to develop them. This framework ensures that national oxygen roadmaps are fully aligned with the WHO Oxygen Resolution and address all of the elements a national oxygen plan needs to have to maximize impact on public health during routine times and in the case of emergencies. We urge Member States to adopt this framework to develop new, or refine existing, roadmaps.

We are delighted to be able to contribute to the meeting by sharing the **Access to Medical Oxygen Scorecard** (ATMO₂S), a new tool to help countries fulfill their bi-annual reporting requirements under the WHO Oxygen Resolution in 2026, 2028, and 2030. In Dakar, we will be seeking feedback from Ministries of Health to finalize the scorecard for publication with our final report in the *Lancet Global Health* in early 2025.

The Commission wishes all parties a productive meeting in Dakar and looks forward to close engagement with Ministries of Health and global health partners, including the **Global Oxygen Alliance** (GO₂AL), in our historic effort to ensure that no patient anywhere dies for lack of access to medical oxygen.

What is the *Lancet Global Health Oxygen Commission*?

The *Lancet Global Health Oxygen Commission* was **announced** in September 2022 to shed light onto the number of patients needing medical oxygen each year and the cost of meeting that need, how to define and measure oxygen access, which oxygen solutions work best in different settings, and how to generate the financing and political will to achieve transformational change. It will address all levels of care from hospital to home, all age groups from neonates to the elderly, all health conditions where oxygen is a recommended treatment, and all the ways in which access to oxygen can contribute to health system strengthening and pandemic preparedness.

The Commission is led by 20 Commissioners and guided by a team of 40 Advisors and an Executive Committee, including representatives from Makerere University, Uganda, icddr,b, Bangladesh, the University of Melbourne and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Australia, and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden — with support from the Every Breath Counts Coalition.

For more information on the Commission, click [here](#), and for a list of Oxygen Commissioners and Advisors, click [here](#).

Contacts

Executive Committee (alphabetical order)

Dr Hamish Graham, University of Melbourne and Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Australia, hamish.graham@rch.org.au

Leith Greenslade, Every Breath Counts, USA, leith@justactions.org

Dr Carina King, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, carina.king@ki.se

Dr Freddy Kitutu, Makerere University, Uganda, kitutufred@gmail.com

Zoë Mullan, Lancet Global Health, UK, zoe.mullan@lancet.com

Dr Ahmed Ehsanur Rahman, icddr,b Bangladesh, ehsanur@icddr.org