

May 2026

SWEP Communique - Increase in POC Prescriptions

SWEP is providing the following information to support awareness of common considerations associated with Portable Oxygen Concentrators (POCs) for consumers requiring domiciliary oxygen.

In recent months, SWEP has observed an increase in POC prescriptions, alongside a rise in consumer requests to change to, or revert to, oxygen cylinders. Feedback from consumers indicates this is most commonly related to practical factors rather than clinical intent.

Common factors reported by consumers include:

- Difficulty managing device weight
- Battery duration not supporting planned or usual community activities
- Perception that the airflow or oxygen delivery from a POC does not feel comparable to oxygen delivered via cylinders

This information is shared to support informed discussions with consumers when exploring oxygen equipment options.

Clinical Considerations & Intended Use

When POCs are being considered, the following areas may assist in determining suitability for individual consumers:

- Whether the consumer's oxygen flow requirements can be met by a POC, or whether alternate oxygen delivery options (e.g. cylinders) may better align with clinical needs.
- How the consumer intends to use the device, including duration, frequency, and environments of use (home/community).
- The consumer's physical capacity to lift, carry and manage the device safely, either independently or with available supports.
- Expected battery duration at the prescribed setting, access to charging options, and implications for extended time away from power sources.

Supporting Resources

- The [POC Comparison Chart](#) available on the SWEP website outlines device specifications, weight and battery duration.
- This resource can be used to support shared decision-making discussions with consumers where helpful.

System and Service Considerations

POCs are a higher-cost oxygen therapy option and generally require a greater proportion of SWEP funding compared with cylinder-based therapies. Where a POC does not align with a consumer's functional capacity or intended use, there is an increased risk of device under-use or abandonment, potentially resulting in:

- Reduced benefit for the consumer
- Requests for equipment changes
- Increased overall system costs

Considering clinical need alongside functional and practical factors can help minimise these risks and support sustainable access to oxygen services.

SWEP appreciates the ongoing collaboration with prescribers in supporting consumers to access oxygen equipment that best meets their individual needs.

For further information, please contact the SWEP swepoxy@gh.org.au

Regards

Narelle Harrison
SWEP Team Leader