

International Ventilator Users Network's mission is to enhance the lives and independence of home mechanical ventilator users and polio survivors through education, advocacy, research and networking.

Ventilator-Assisted Living

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Special thanks ...

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How to contact IVUN

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To be sure you receive email updates from PHI and IVUN, set your spam filters to allow messages from info@post-polio.org and info@ventusers.org.

Vent Users Denied Flight from Milwaukee to Las Vegas

Michael Luber (msl21@wi.rr.com)

My brother and I both use the PLV-100 (Philips Respironics), and I have taken more than 90 flights using my vent.

We planned a trip to Las Vegas on Wednesday, May 6th, but it was canceled the Friday before by Airtran Airlines. The airlines would not let us use our ventilators during takeoff and landing, because the vents are considered electronic devices and had not been approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

I am aware of the new Air Carriers Access Act (ACAA) regulations that started May 13, which requires our ventilators to have a sticker.

It was suggested that we sue for inconsistent practice because we flew on Airtran twice before. But, an attorney told us that there is not much we can do and that the damage is minimal. We disagree since we lost our vacation to visit our brother and niece. It helps to have some direction from others who have fought this battle before. I am requesting that those who have experience with filing complaints or suing airlines to contact me.

IVUN Issues a Call for Action

The Department of Transportation (DOT) final rule "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel" became effective May 13, 2009. The rule contains many improvements for people with disabilities, and the major changes that affect ventilator users are described on pages 4 and 5.

The May 13th deadline has passed, and the FAA admits that "very few POCs and no other respiratory devices such as ventilators, respirators and CPAP machines display labels." Without the appropriate stickers on their equipment future travelers will face the same consequences as the Luber brothers.

Ventilator Users and Their Advocates Are Asked to Contact

■ Nancy Lauck Claussen, FAA, at nancy.l.claussen@faa.gov, to expedite the approval of ventilators for flying and/or delay the implementation of the specific regulation requiring a sticker until the FAA and the manufacturers complete the process. Claussen acknowledged that the FAA stickers are not readily available but the DOT decided to go ahead with the ruling because of its many other improved initiatives for people with disabilities. So for now, it is "up to the carriers."

■ Providers of ventilators (home health companies) to ask them to contact manufacturers about the urgency of approving their vents for flying.

■ The customer service departments of the manufacturers asking them to make expedite the process of issuing stickers for their equipment and/or negotiate a change in the date of implementation with the FAA.

This is the status of the situation at press time. Watch www.ventusers.org for updates and to find email addresses and phone numbers of people to contact.