

For immediate release

9 September 2021, 08:00 BST

International Respiratory Coalition launches to transform post-pandemic respiratory healthcare

COVID-19 highlights urgent need for national respiratory strategies to drive improvements in patient outcomes and healthcare system resilience

The [European Respiratory Society \(ERS\)](#), the Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP), AstraZeneca, Amgen and leading respiratory clinicians have launched the International Respiratory Coalition, a new partnership to transform post-pandemic respiratory healthcare.

The Coalition aims to support governments and healthcare systems in their recovery from COVID-19 by strengthening respiratory care. The Coalition will seek to improve outcomes for people living with respiratory diseases by supporting the creation of ambitious national-level respiratory strategies and by building resilience in managing pandemics. Membership is open to organisations and individuals within the respiratory community who share the Coalition's goals.

Nearly 600 million people globally live with chronic respiratory diseases including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchiectasis and many rare and severe respiratory diseases.¹ About four million premature deaths each year have been attributed to chronic respiratory diseases,² which is double the number of reported deaths from COVID-19 in the first 12 months of the pandemic.³ Prior to the pandemic, progress to improve chronic respiratory diseases care was slow, and in some countries had stagnated over the past decade.⁴

During the pandemic, some patients with chronic respiratory diseases that contracted COVID-19 were shown to be at greater risk of hospitalisation.^{5,6} In addition, patients with chronic respiratory diseases faced disruptions to healthcare services and quality care⁷, demonstrating new approaches to enable patients to better control their condition, reduce hospitalisations, and ultimately to decrease pressure on healthcare systems, are needed.⁸

Marc Humbert, Professor of Respiratory Medicine at the Université Paris-Saclay, Director of Respiratory and Intensive Care Department (French Reference Centre for Pulmonary Hypertension) at the Hôpital Bicêtre (Assistance Publique Hôpitaux de Paris), Vice Coordinator of the European Reference Network ERN-LUNG, and incoming President of the ERS, said: "The COVID-19 pandemic is having a devastating impact on human health and is revealing gaps in respiratory care that require urgent attention. The European Respiratory Society is excited to be a founding member of the International Respiratory Coalition, working to ensure better respiratory care is central to government and healthcare system recovery plans."

Tonya Winders, President of GAAPP, said: “Nearly 600 million people worldwide live with chronic respiratory diseases. Unfortunately, few countries have national respiratory strategies to improve treatment and help patients control their disease and achieve better outcomes. The International Respiratory Coalition will play a critical role in addressing the longstanding under-prioritisation of chronic respiratory diseases within healthcare systems in the year ahead.”

Ruud Dobber, Executive Vice President, BioPharmaceuticals Business Unit of AstraZeneca, said: “The International Respiratory Coalition has an important opportunity to reduce morbidity and mortality in respiratory disease while building healthcare system resilience. AstraZeneca has been committed to advancing respiratory science and care for more than 50 years and we are excited to contribute to this important initiative to support patients who are underserved today.”

Darryl Sleep, Senior Vice President, Global Medical and Chief Medical Officer of Amgen, said: “While COVID-19 exposed the staggering health disparities and disproportionate burden on racial and ethnic minorities and other groups historically underserved by healthcare systems, these same communities have long felt the negative impact of respiratory disease. This partnership with the International Respiratory Coalition will help Amgen in our mission to serve patients, which includes working within communities to remove the barriers that prevent patients from living their healthiest lives.”

Chronic respiratory diseases

Chronic respiratory diseases, including asthma, COPD, bronchiectasis and others, represent a significant and growing burden on individuals, societies, and healthcare systems around the world.² Nearly 600 million people globally live with chronic respiratory diseases,¹ however this figure is likely underestimated as many people remain undiagnosed.⁸ In recent decades, the burden of respiratory diseases has increased as a result of health inequalities, environmental factors, and growing and aging populations, threatening health system resilience to external challenges.⁸

International Respiratory Coalition

The International Respiratory Coalition was formed to address existing challenges in respiratory healthcare services that were exacerbated by the emergence of COVID-19 and seeks the prioritisation of respiratory care reform by governments and national healthcare systems. The Coalition will implement a multi-stakeholder, collaborative approach to working with governments to create or improve national respiratory strategies.

The International Respiratory Coalition is coordinated by the European Respiratory Society, in partnership with the Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform, AstraZeneca, Amgen and other organisations with an interest in respiratory health. Each partner will provide funding or contributions of time and expertise to deliver the aims of the Coalition at a global or national level.

For more information, visit: <https://www.ersnet.org/advocacy/international-respiratory-coalition/>

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About the European Respiratory Society (ERS):

ERS is one of the leading medical organisations in the respiratory field, with a growing membership of over 35,000 respiratory clinicians, scientists and allied healthcare professionals, spanning more than 160 countries worldwide. ERS prioritises science, education and advocacy in order to promote lung health, alleviate suffering from disease and drive standards for respiratory medicine globally.

www.ersnet.org

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