



Democratic Republic of the Congo

The availability of oxygen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was low prior to the pandemic, but COVID-19 emphasized the importance of oxygen as a critical treatment for those struggling to breathe.

As of 2020, the DRC Ministry of Health, with support from PATH and other partners, carried out multiple initiatives to improve reliable supply of oxygen, including:

ASSESSMENT

+ Conducted a national **biomedical equipment survey** of 692 health facilities across the country:

- » The results showed only **32% of facilities provided oxygen therapy**.
- » Most of the facilities that did offer oxygen had an extremely limited supply of **concentrators (31%) and cylinders (11%)**.

+ Currently developing and disseminating simple tools for facilities to regularly track and manage biomedical equipment data.



COORDINATION & STRATEGIC PLANNING

In collaboration with key partners, developed a **National Roadmap for Scaling Up Medical Oxygen and Pulse Oximeters** and related advocacy plan, which envisions universal access to medical oxygen and pulse oximeters so no patient ever admitted to a health facility dies due to lack of oxygen.



EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT & REPAIR & CAPACITY-BUILDING

+ With support from PATH and Unitaaid, **procured** equipment to be distributed to numerous health facilities across the country:

700
**oxygen
concentrators**

850
**pulse
oximeters**

40K
**oxygen
masks**

210K
**oxygen therapy
interfaces**

50
ventilators
*donated with
support from
PATH and USAID*



+ Developed an updated **guideline for the use of medical oxygen**.

+ Trained **175 health care providers** (physicians and nurses) and **44 biomedical engineers** on the use and routine maintenance of the newly donated ventilators.



The availability of oxygen in the DRC has improved in the last two years following the interventions of key oxygen partners.

Additional efforts, like supporting equitable distribution of new equipment and increasing advocacy efforts to backstop potential budget shortfalls for respiratory care, are critical to move from 32% oxygen availability (2020) to 80% by 2025.