



**COPD Foundation
South Africa**



NewsLetter

August 2025

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COPD Foundation (South Africa) Newsletter

Welcome to this issue of the COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Foundation Newsletter, where you will find the following:

1. COPD Foundation of South Africa and its commitment
2. The GAAP AMEA Regional Meeting
3. The Lung Health Resolution
4. Smoking and COPD
5. World Lung Day

The COPD Foundation of South Africa

The COPD Foundation of South Africa is a member of the Global Allergy and Asthma Patient Platform (GAAPP). GAAPP represents over 175 organisations from all continents. The COPD Foundation of South Africa aims to empower patients, carers and healthcare providers of patients who live with COPD, to improve the quality of life and health outcomes for these patients.

The GAAPP African & Middle East Alliance (AMEA) Regional Meeting



On August 23, 2025, the Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP), together with its affiliate, the African & Middle East Alliance (AMEA), will be hosting the first ever regional meeting in Lagos, Nigeria. In total, 16 member organisations on the African continent, unite to create AMEA, a regional alliance, to address lung health issues.

It is a great opportunity for the COPD Foundation of South Africa to join members across the region as they converge and deliberate on strategies for improving the care for respiratory diseases including COPD, in Africa & the Middle East Region. Care for allergy related diseases will also receive attention at this regional meeting.

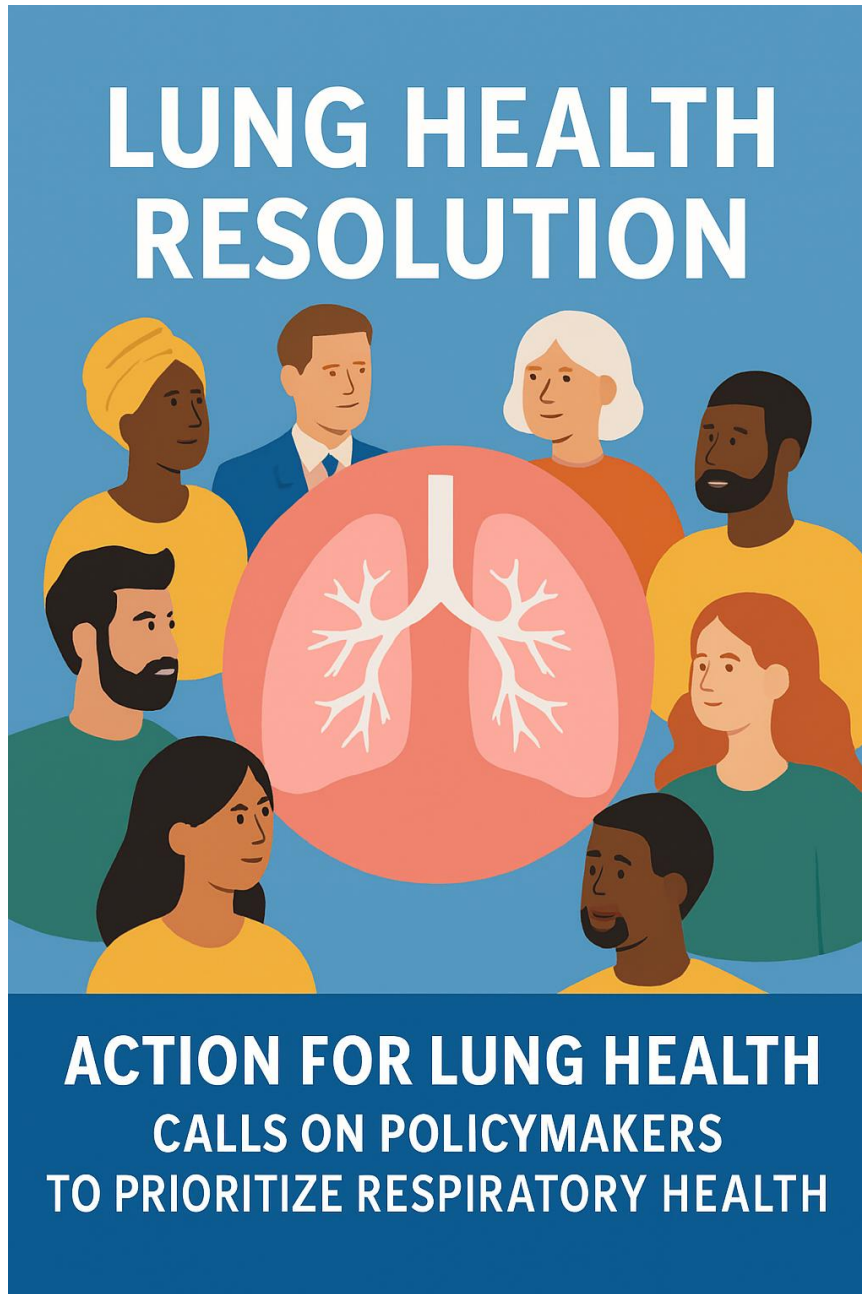
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"Allergy and respiratory diseases are often misunderstood or misdiagnosed, leaving many patients suffering without proper treatment. By organizing this meeting, we hope to bring much-needed attention to this condition and advocate for change on a regional scale, we call on the Nigerian Government and the entire African/ Middle East Leaders to support this move" said Perpetual Obiageri Nwangoro, African & Middle East Regional Alliance Administrator at GAAPP, as she looks forward to the Regional Meeting.

To read the full article about the the Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform & AMEA Regional Meeting, please click on links below. Also attached at the end of this newsletter.

1. https://web.facebook.com/100063899019915/posts/pfbid0Q1HpfNogbksNrdYi6prwRBV3Dtz31J4xybEFtPrAB5PMaHwtA4NvsSMQGkBAQdhCI/?_rdc=1&_rdr
2. [AMEA, GAAPP African & Middle East Alliance, announces its first ever regional meeting on the 23rd of August 2025 in Lagos, Nigeria - Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform](#)

The Lung Health Resolution



On May 23, 2025, a landmark resolution on improving lung health was unanimously adopted by all Member States of the World Health Organisation (WHO) at the 78th World Health Assembly, which took place in GENEVA. This resolution is the first comprehensive commitment by the WHO, to prioritise the full spectrum of the global burden of lung diseases, which account for nearly one in five deaths worldwide. The scope of the Lung Health Resolution is wide reaching, as it focuses on all respiratory (communicable and non-communicable) diseases including tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza, COVID-19, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), pulmonary fibrosis, asthma, lung cancer and rare lung conditions, and even extends to address the impacts of air pollution, climate change and the tobacco industry.

The Lung Health Resolution promotes and prioritises an integrated lung health approach which considers the perspectives of patients and their caregivers in the planning and implementation of all aspects of prevention, diagnosis and treatment strategies.

The realisation of this colossal milestone was a collaborative effort from many stakeholders, including advocacy groups represented by the Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP). Reacting to the adoption of the resolution, Tonya Winders, GAAPP President & CEO, had the following to say, *“This is a monumental moment for people living with lung conditions. For too long, lung health has been under-recognised. This resolution validates that healthy lungs are essential to healthy lives.”*

Reacting to the adoption of the resolution, Tonya Winders, GAAPP President & CEO, had the following to say, *“This is a monumental moment for people living with lung conditions. For too long, lung health has been under-recognised. This resolution validates that healthy lungs are essential to healthy lives.”*

To benefit fully from this resolution, countries need to develop and implement impactful lung health strategies that enhance patient outcomes, and the WHO needs to track progress and hold individual countries accountable to their commitments. Countries need to prioritise prevention policies including vaccines, whilst strengthening primary health care delivery systems and improving access to affordable diagnostics and treatment options.

To read more about the Lung Health Resolution, please click here:

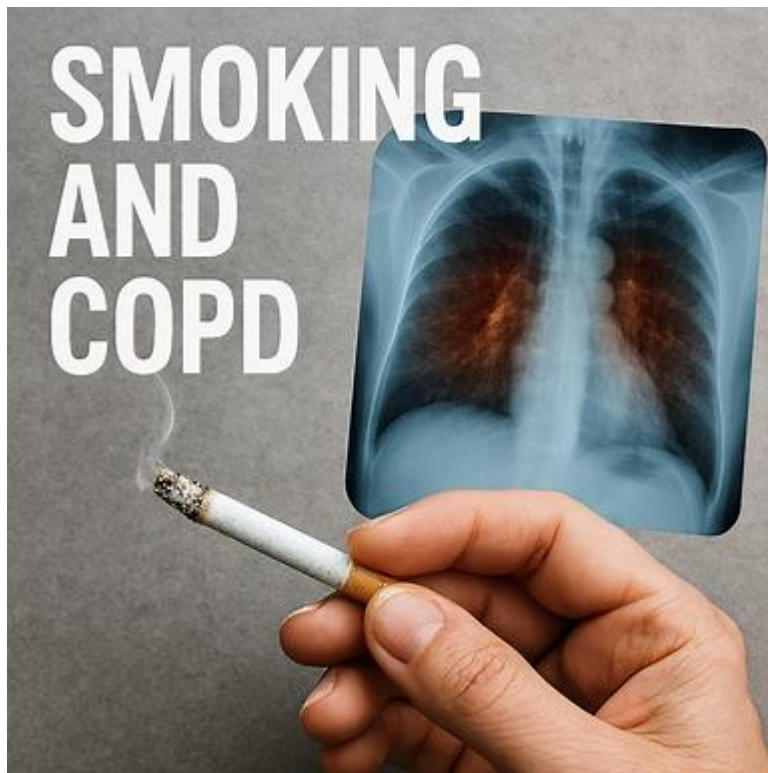
[Promoting and prioritising an integrated lung health approach](#)

The Lung Health Resolution calls upon countries to commit to the following key aspects of the resolution:

- **Global Action Plan** to establish a framework for addressing both communicable and non-communicable respiratory diseases globally, focusing on patient safety, prevention, early detection, effective diagnosis, treatment, and long-term care, with specific targets.
- **Call for dedicated health investment** to expand expertise through training, particularly among primary health care workers, enabling timely diagnosis and effective support for those living with respiratory diseases.
- **Acknowledge indoor and outdoor air pollution** as one of the leading risk factors for lung diseases, and commit to prevent, to promote lung health and reduce exacerbations of respiratory conditions.
- **Support expansion of patient-centred research, surveillance and data collection** to provide innovative diagnostic tools and new treatments.
- **Promote equitable access** to quality, safe, efficacious, effective and affordable diagnosis, therapeutics, medicines and vaccines.
- **Support integrated approaches to disease management** and their potential for integrated lung health programmes

If implemented, these recommendations would have a great impact in overcoming major barriers to accessing comprehensive care and ultimately improve health outcomes for those living with chronic respiratory diseases, with COPD and asthma being amongst the most common.

Smoking and COPD



Amongst the key action plans of The Lung Health Resolution, is the need to acknowledge indoor and outdoor air pollution as one of the leading risk factors for lung diseases, and commit to prevent, to promote lung health and reduce exacerbations of respiratory conditions. According to the World Health Organisation, smoking is the leading risk factor for the development and progression of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death, responsible for approximately 480,000 deaths annually. This underscores the need for health care systems to prioritise the reduction or elimination of tobacco use, especially in individuals living with COPD. COPD as defined by the GOLD Report is a chronic lung disease characterised by chronic respiratory symptoms due do abnormalities of the airways (bronchitis) and/or abnormalities of the air sacs or alveoli (including emphysema), which cause obstruction to airflow, which may be persistent and often progressive. Symptoms of COPD may vary from person to person, but the common ones are breathlessness, a frequent cough, tightness in the chest and an unusual tiredness.

While smoking, you inhale smoke and particles which can damage your airways and the air sacs, called alveoli.

In addition to being the number one risk factor for COPD, smoking has other detrimental effects to your health. Smoking may increase your risk of stroke, heart disease, and many types of cancer. It may also weaken your immune system, delay recovery of tissues, cause erectile dysfunction, a reduced sex drive and infertility.

Research shows that smoking shortens your life expectancy, as people with COPD who continue to smoke are more likely to experience worsening of their symptoms, have more frequent flare-ups, and are a higher risk of dying early compared to those who stop smoking.

If you're wondering how your smoking habit may affect your health or life expectancy, talk openly with your doctor. They can help you understand your risks and work with you on a plan to quit. **It's never too late to benefit from stopping.**

The decline of one's lung function is accelerated far more rapidly in a patient living with COPD, if that person is a smoker than in a patient who does not smoke. Early exposure to smoking tobacco containing products including vaping, has far worse respiratory outcomes.

Second hand smoke can also exacerbate COPD symptoms and its progression. In smokers, there are several compounding factors that can further accelerate disease progression and worsen symptoms, and they are:

1. Air Pollution - exposure to outdoor and indoor pollution, (e.g. vehicle emissions, industrial fumes, biomass smoke) can inflame airways and reduce lung function.
2. Recurrent Respiratory Infections - such as bronchitis and pneumonia, can cause lasting damage to lung tissue.
3. Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (AATD) - a hereditary disorder that reduces the body's ability to protect lung tissue from damage, resulting in a more severe COPD in smokers.

Quitting smoking is the most effective intervention to prevent further lung function decline and slow down the progression of COPD.

All patients living with COPD who are smokers should be strongly encouraged to quit smoking. Quitting smoking is also advised as a preventative method to those who do not have COPD but have risk factors for developing COPD. Current research offers limited and inconclusive evidence that e-cigarettes are effective as an aid to long-term smoking

cessation. Emerging studies suggest that e-cigarette use (vaping) increases the risk of developing respiratory diseases, including COPD and lung cancer.

Annually, on 31 May, the world observes 'World No Tobacco Day, established by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1987, to raise global awareness about the dangers of tobacco use and smoking related diseases, and to encourage smoking cessation.

Here below are some of the benefits derived from smoking cessation:

- Even though existing damage cannot be reversed, quitting smoking significantly slows the decline in lung function.
- Slower progression of disease may delay the need for oxygen.
- Smoking causes chronic inflammation in the airways, so quitting will reduce inflammation.
- There is a reduction in the frequency of exacerbations or COPD flare-ups, with a resultant decrease in the number of hospitalisations triggered by the sudden worsening of symptoms.
- The patient experiences a general improvement in physical, emotional and mental health and a better quality of life.

We, as the COPD Foundation in South Africa, acknowledge that many patients living with COPD face significant challenges in their attempts to give up smoking. We will cover the topic of smoking cessation in future to support those who may need to be redirected to appropriate resources. In the meantime, if you have COPD and are a smoker, please talk to your doctor about ways to quit.

Please click on link below included for your use is an important resource as provided by GAAPP, the COPD Patient Empowerment Guide:

[ENG COPD empGuide SV](#) (a GAAPP Resource)



World Lung Day is celebrated annually on September 25th, to raise global awareness about lung health and respiratory diseases. It's a powerful initiative led by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS), bringing together individuals, healthcare professionals, and organizations to advocate for cleaner air and healthier lungs for all. The theme for 2025 is: "Healthy Lungs, Healthy Life", and it emphasises the link between respiratory wellness and overall well-being.

References:

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3. **World Health Organization.** Promoting and Prioritizing an Integrated Lung Health Approach. WHA78.5. Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, Agenda item 13.1, May 27, 2025. https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA78/A78_R5-en.pdf
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9. <https://firsnet.org/world-lung-day-2025>
10. [The GAAP COPD Patient Empowerment Guide](#)



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GLOBAL ALLERGY & AIRWAYS
PATIENT PLATFORM
Africa & the Middle East Alliance

PRESS RELEASE

22 August 2025

RESPIRATORY DISEASES REPRESENT A GLOBAL BURDEN ESPECIALLY IN AFRICA

In 2021, lung diseases were among the 3 leading causes of mortality causing over 18 million deaths globally¹ and having devastating consequences for patients and families. But the situation in Africa seems especially alarming, 1 in 10 children in Africa have asthma symptoms², making it the most common non-communicable disease (NCD) in children and adolescents in Africa². In Cameroon², pollution and disease stigma are still significant barriers to achieving asthma control. In Nigeria², where the prevalence is high, the cost of asthma medicines not being subsidized is still a barrier to therapy. On the contrary, in South Africa², despite the availability of asthma medications lack of efficient diagnosis is a barrier to care, leading this country to have the highest prevalence of childhood asthma in the African continent.² Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the third leading cause of death worldwide.³ and an important cause of death in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Smoking is an important risk factor for COPD in SSA, and this exposure needs to be reduced.³

GAAPP – GLOBAL ALLERGY AND AIRWAYS PATIENT PLATFORM – AND THEIR 16 LOCAL MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS CREATE “AMEA”, AN AFRICAN AND MIDDLE EAST REGION ALLIANCE

GAAPP - Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform - is a global umbrella organization linking member organizations worldwide with a common interest: supporting and improving the quality of life for people around the globe who suffer from allergic, airways, and atopic diseases. 16 local member organizations unite to create AMEA, a regional alliance, to address lung health issues:

- Allergy and Asthma Organization - Kenya
- Amaka Chiuwike Uba Foundation - Nigeria
- Association Santé Meilleure Vie Meilleure SM-VM - Togo
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of West Africa - Gambia
- Asthma and Allergy Patient Association - Ethiopia
- Asthma Relief Campaign Project - Nigeria
- (The) Asthma Foundation - Sierra Leone
- Community and Family Aid Foundation - Ghana
- COPD Foundation - South Africa
- Frontiers for Hemophilia and Bleeding Disorders - Sierra Leone
- Helping Hands Foundation - Pakistan
- Hope Life International - Gambia
- National Asthma Education Program - South Africa
- NCD Alliance - Kenya
- Permian Health Lung Institute - Gambia
- V- Life savers Foundation - Gambia

Together, the AMEA Alliance aims to:

- **Raise Awareness:** Educate the public about respiratory and allergic conditions, their symptoms, and the importance of early diagnosis.
- **Encourage Medical Consultation:** Empower individuals experiencing symptoms such as difficulty breathing, chest pain, or similar issues to seek medical advice.
- **Advocate for Better Care and Treatment:** Call for improved access to medical care, and research funding to improve the quality of life of patients living with allergic and respiratory conditions in the region.
- **Support:** Push for increased investment in research, advocacy, and medical education, especially in African & Middle East regions where respiratory diseases remain largely overlooked.

AMEA, GAAPP AFRICAN & MIDDLE EAST ALLIANCE, ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST EVER REGIONAL MEETING ON THE 23rd OF AUGUST 2025 IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

Lagos, Nigeria, 23rd August 2025– The Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP), together with its affiliate, the African & Middle East Alliance (AMEA), is proud to announce the first ever regional meeting on August 23rd, 2025. This milestone marks a significant step in creating opportunity for members across the region to converge, collaborate, share best practices, discuss challenges and develop strategies for improving allergy and airways diseases care in Africa & the Middle East Region.

“Allergy and respiratory diseases are often misunderstood or misdiagnosed, leaving many patients suffering without proper treatment. By organizing this meeting, we hope to bring much-needed attention to this condition and advocate for change on a regional scale, we call on the Nigerian Government and the entire African/ Middle East Leaders to support this move” **said Perpetual Obiageri Nwangoro, African & Middle East Regional Alliance Administrator at GAAPP.**

For more information and how to get involved

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- 3- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39019625/>
- 4- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8886964/>