

## Lifebox: An Opportunity to Make a Difference

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**Pulse oximetry has single-handedly changed the ability to provide safe sedation and general anesthesia.** Most of us practicing in resource-rich environments cannot imagine an induction, a recovery, a ventilated patient, a laboring mother, or a child in extremis being treated in the ED without a pulse ox to guide interventions and clinical care. Yet every day, in most resource-poor settings, each of these events and patients is treated without the reassurance of a pulse oximeter and often without oxygen.

The unfortunate and dangerous reality has been long known to those working in emerging settings and to global anesthesiology thought leaders interested in providing patient safety throughout the world. In 2004, at the World Congress of Anaesthesiologists, the idea for a Global Oximetry (GO) Project was born. Support from the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland and General Electric Healthcare allowed the launch of the project in 2007, and the results of this work were published later that year.<sup>1</sup>

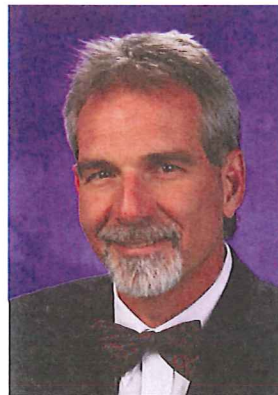
Continued work identified a huge need not only for pulse oximetry, but also the education and training on its use and the treatment of poor oxygenation.<sup>2</sup>

Simultaneously, the World Health Organization (WHO), under the leadership of Atul Gawande, M.D., a surgeon and leader in public health, developed the Safe Surgery Saves Lives (SSSL) initiative. This project resulted in a landmark publication revealing the life- and limb-saving benefits of a surgical checklist, including the use of pulse oximetry in every surgical setting.<sup>1</sup> The combined efforts of the GO and SSSL resulted in a WHO gathering, including academics from Harvard, the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA), procurement experts and industry leaders to evaluate the possibility of a low-cost pulse oximeter for low-income settings.

The Lifebox Initiative [www.lifebox.org](http://www.lifebox.org) is the result of these many years of dedication to improving the global safety of anesthesia. The product is ISO- and CE-certified, has features



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Chicago. We anticipate him speaking about his important work on global patient safety and his vision for making every surgery and anesthetic safe. The ASA GHO is grateful for the advocacy that Dr. Gawande provides for patient safety, and specifically the essential use of pulse oximetry worldwide.

For more information on and dialogue about Lifebox, please visit the GHO booth in the ASA Resource Center in McCormick Place during the Annual Meeting. Information and a connection for donation are available on the GHO website [www.asahq.org/gho/lifebox](http://www.asahq.org/gho/lifebox).

You know the impact of pulse oximetry. You use it *every day, for every sedation, every anesthetic, on every patient*. And you have the power to make this a reality in every operative setting worldwide for the small commitment of \$250.

**DONATE NOW!**

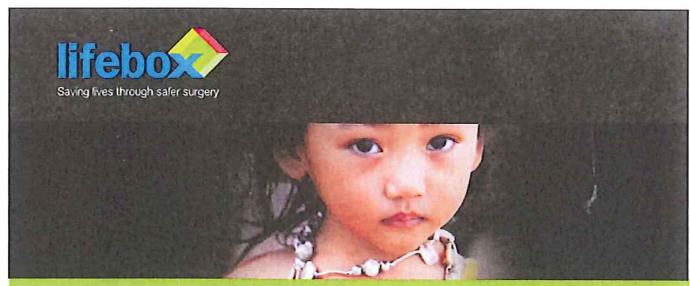
**References:**

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2. Walker IA, Merry AF, Wilson IH, et al. Global oximetry: an international anaesthesia quality improvement project. *Anaesthesia*. 2009;64(10):1051-1060.
3. Haynes AB, Weiser TG, Berry WR, et al. A surgical safety checklist to reduce morbidity and mortality in a global population. *N Engl J Med*. 2009;360(5):491-499.
4. Funk LM, Weiser TG, Berry WR, et al. Global operating theatre distribution and pulse oximetry supply: an estimation from reported data. *Lancet*. 2010;376(9746):1055-1061.

for sustainability in austere settings, and is packaged and delivered with appropriate education for a mere \$250 (U.S.). Lifebox plans to deliver a pulse oximeter with language-specific training to the estimated 77,000 operating rooms worldwide that currently function without this life-saving technology (accounting for approximately 35 million patients per year cared for without a pulse oximeter).<sup>2</sup> This effort is being scaled up to provide 5,000 oximeters in 2011 and 12,000 oximeters by 2013. But this admirable goal cannot happen without you!

Following recommendations from the ASA Committee on Global Humanitarian Outreach (GHO), the ASA Board of Directors approved an initiative to support Lifebox. This effort, which means to engage the ASA membership, is being launched at the Annual Meeting. With the purchase of one pulse oximeter at \$250 (U.S.) by each of the approximately 46,000 ASA members, the Lifebox Initiative goal of providing 77,000 oximeters would be more than half met in this year alone! Imagine the impact on the safety of the world's patients ... Would you consider *not using* a pulse ox in any patient you anesthetized in the U.S.?

This year, Dr. Gawande, Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital, is the keynote speaker at the opening ceremonies of ANESTHESIOLOGY 2011 in



**Let's save lives together.**

Imagine administering anesthesia to your patient without the use of a pulse oximeter. In more than 77,000 operating rooms across the developing world, your colleagues have no alternative –it's just too expensive. Access is the most significant barrier to widespread pulse oximetry use.

**A \$250 donation to Lifebox** puts this essential safety device into the hands of colleagues who need it most. Each pulse oximeter comes with training materials and a WHO Surgical Safety Checklist, shown to significantly reduce operating room complications and mortality rates.

When you donate a pulse oximeter, you're making an investment that will save lives for years to come.

Become a part of the Lifebox mission.

Visit us at [www.asahq.org/gho/lifebox](http://www.asahq.org/gho/lifebox) to donate and learn more.