



February 4, 2025

Freeport, NY USA

Dear **ANDI** Members and Chamber Operators,

By now, most of us have heard or read about the tragic hyperbaric accident in Troy, Michigan last Thursday morning. Each of us could cry for the family of the child whose life was lost. Nothing can compensate for such an event. I am responding to the many inquiries and questions sent to us over the past 3 days.

As expected, there are thousands of internet postings of condemnation and even vicious and misguided statements about the facility, the operators, the lack of oversight, the manufacturer, the HBO industry and even against the family. Ignorance is evident in all of these comments. Examples of such ignorance includes: oxygen is flammable; oxygen is combustible; oxygen is explosive; jewelry in the chamber can cause a spark; street clothes are OK; synthetic fabrics for pillows and toys are permitted; velcro fasteners are not a spark potential; electronic devices are permitted, (the absurd, "I am expecting or making a call"); patients do not require grounding in an oxygen environment; low relative humidity does not increase the risk of a spark; oxygen analyzers are an optional item at our clinic; Gurneys and door hinges can be oil-lubed if it is not over-used and wiped off; cleaning and degreasing the chamber is not a necessary daily task; oxygen safety and standardized training is optional; etc

No determination has been finalized as to the actual cause of the January 30 event but it certainly was not "an explosion" of the chamber. An oxygen flash-fire would appear to be an explosion as it is over in a few seconds in a "whoosh"; usually before the observer can process the event. ASME-PVHO certified chambers do not "explode".

ANDI will make no assumptions regarding the incident's cause. I am certain that we will learn more facts to better explain, understand and learn from the results. We certainly do defend the safety record of hyperbarics, despite the poor education and enforcement prevalent in our industry. We strongly support the 23 fire safety rules in the **ANDI**HCO textbook and training program. Also, we suggest that you display the **ANDI** safety posters prominently.

Some stats are presented here for consideration. The last fatal clinical hyperbaric accident in the USA was in May of 2009 and was caused by criminal negligence. Total deaths worldwide due to accidents in hyperbaric chambers is 216 over the 88 year history. Less than ten in the USA over this period. Hyperbaric accidents are extremely rare. So how many accidents have occurred *without breeches* in the safety code promoted by **ANDI**, UHMS, US Navy, US Air Force, US Space Force and NFPA? Research shows that number is thus far, ZERO.

We all still drive and fly despite tens of thousands of fatal accidents. HBOT is far safer. Accident analysis usually generates improved safety procedures. I do hope that this tragedy elevates the awareness of safety in hyperbarics. We will disseminate more as we learn more facts. For more information : contact@andihq.com

Edward A. Betts,
Executive Director

