

Setting the Strategic Direction for the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine

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As president of the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSMD), one of my chief responsibilities is to support the proper alignment of our organizational priorities and initiatives.¹ For nearly a quarter century, the AADSMD has been the leader in advancing dental sleep medicine and promoting recognition of oral appliance therapy.² However, the ongoing turbulence in the changing U.S. health care system makes it more important than ever to ensure that the AADSMD's route is fixed on its mission to "advance the dentist's role in the treatment of sleep disordered breathing." One way for an organization to keep its bearings and remain on course is through the development of a comprehensive strategic plan.

In September, the AADSMD board of directors held a strategic planning meeting, during which we reviewed and discussed the results of an independent membership survey that was conducted to provide a better understanding of the needs and expectations of our membership. Results show that core interests of our members include continuing education, professional standards and policies, and stronger integration between the medical and dental communities.³ The survey provided a starting point for an extensive strategic planning process, which resulted in a final strategic plan that was approved by the AADSMD board of directors at our quarterly meeting in December. I would like to share with you some of the strategic goals that will guide the AADSMD over the next three years as we continue to help members excel in the practice of dental sleep medicine to reduce the burden of snoring and sleep apnea.

Define the Scope and Nature for Dental Sleep Medicine Practice

As more dentists begin to treat obstructive sleep apnea every year, and with physicians increasingly becoming aware of the effectiveness of mandibular advancement devices, it is critical for the AADSMD to continue to clarify the role of the dentist in the management of patients with sleep disordered breathing. In 2013, the AADSMD updated its treatment protocol for oral appliance therapy, providing clear and concise directions to help dentists practice within the limits of our licensure.⁴ Currently the AADSMD, in partnership with the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), is finalizing a draft of updated clinical practice guidelines for oral appliance therapy, which will be made available for public comment before being published in 2015. Looking ahead, the AADSMD also is planning to conduct a consensus conference to develop a comprehensive standard of care paper for the practice of dental sleep medicine, clearly delineating the role of the dentist in the collaborative care of patients with sleep disordered breathing.

Increase the Number of Providers Trained in Dental Sleep Medicine

In tandem with the obesity epidemic in the U.S., the public health burden of sleep disordered breathing has continued to rise over the last decade.⁵ Therefore, it is critical for a greater number of dentists to become involved in providing effective treatment for the millions of people with obstructive sleep apnea. The AADSMD will continue to recruit more dentists to join us in our mission while also supporting the work of the American Board of Dental Sleep Medicine in promoting the highest standards of care.

Support and Advance Quality in Dental Sleep Medicine

Health care reform is drawing more attention to quality of care by promoting the Triple Aim of better care for individuals, better health for populations, and lower per capita costs.⁶ Because oral appliance therapy addresses a chronic medical disease that is intertwined with a patient's overall health care, it is essential for dental sleep medicine practitioners to demonstrate quality and value in the care that we provide. Therefore, the AADSMD is going to develop and evaluate quality measures for oral appliance therapy. Recognizing that scientific research provides a foundation for quality clinical care, the AADSMD also is going to explore opportunities to fund new research grants while continuing to publish relevant research in the *Journal of Dental Sleep Medicine*.

Broaden Educational Offerings to Better Meet the Needs of Members

Providing the highest quality of professional education for members of every level of experience continues to be a point of emphasis for the AADSMD. We will strengthen and expand our year-round offering of educational opportunities—including the AADSMD annual meeting, Essentials of Dental Sleep Medicine course, Practical Demonstration Course, and Study Club—to keep members on the cutting edge of dental sleep medicine.

Strengthen Integration between the Dental and Medical Communities

A clear mandate from the recent membership survey was the need for the AADSMD to facilitate greater collaboration between dentists and sleep physicians. One of our top priorities is to streamline patient referrals between AASM accredited sleep centers and qualified dentists. The AADSMD also is taking a more proactive approach to educate sleep physicians about recent advances in oral appliance therapy. As a result of our efforts, dental sleep medicine leaders will be presenting a

session at the AASM Sleep Medicine Trends Course in February and a meet-the-professor session at SLEEP 2015, the 29th Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies, LLC, in June. Recently the AADSM also became a partner in the National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and led by the AASM. The project promotes the achievement of the Healthy People 2020 sleep health objectives, one of which is to increase the medical evaluation of people with symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea.

I look forward to providing periodic updates to keep members informed of the AADSM's progress as we set our course on the route established by our strategic plan.

CITATION

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