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# American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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**Report of the 2013 – 2014 AASM President**  
**SLEEP 2014**  
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As we envision the future, it is often useful to look at history. When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first satellite to orbit earth, and later the first cosmonaut human to orbit earth and return safely, many said that we had lost the space race. When President Kennedy challenged the Nation to land a human on the moon and return him safely by the end of the decade, many thought it was just another political speech.

Skepticism was replaced with pride when Neil Armstrong made his “one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” This is the American way, to turn a challenge into an opportunity and to predict the future by creating it.

I remind you of these events because in the past year many members have contacted me to discuss the state of the sleep field, and some have expressed a similar pessimism about the future. Many feel that, “Sleep medicine physicians have lost the race.” Our specialty has the same opportunity: to turn challenges into opportunities and to predict the future by creating it.

The Academy’s role in shaping our future is being guided by a strategic plan that was developed by the Board of Directors to prioritize and optimize our operations. As part of this planning process, the Board reviewed and recalibrated our vision and mission statements. In an era when complex ideas often have to be condensed to 140 characters or less, words matter more than ever.

The concise new vision statement for the Academy is, “*Achieving optimal health through better sleep,*” which emphasizes the vital role of sleep specialists in improving the health of populations. To achieve the lofty goal expressed by our vision, we will continue to empower sleep medicine professionals to thrive in a changing health care system. Therefore, our new mission statement is: *The AASM improves sleep health and promotes high quality patient centered care through advocacy, education, strategic research, and practice standards.* This statement summarizes our organizational priorities and reminds us that the needs of the patient are at the center of all that we do.

Following last year's SLEEP meeting, we began discussions about the direction of the field, guided by emerging outlines of the new landscape and cognizant that a viable care model should encompass the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aim of improving the patient experience of care, improving the health of populations, and reducing the per capita cost of health care. Ultimately the Board of Directors approved a new integrated care paradigm for sleep medicine that promotes comprehensive care management for patients with sleep diseases through collaborative relationships with primary care physicians and other providers in multiple disciplines. The paradigm recognizes that primary care providers will play an increasingly important role in screening patients for a sleep illness, evaluating them and coordinating their long-term care.

However, the paradigm also emphasizes that the provision of value-based care in sleep medicine depends on the expertise of board certified sleep medicine physicians. Sleep specialists must maintain the central role in developing care standards, evaluating and testing patients with complex co-morbid conditions, interpreting sleep studies, providing durable medical equipment, and monitoring treatment outcomes. In the "patient-centered medical neighborhood," sleep specialists will be great neighbors to the medical home. This paradigm was discussed at great length and received widespread acceptance during a summit of sleep medicine stakeholders and thought leaders hosted by the Academy last fall and at the Academy's Sleep Medicine Trends course in Phoenix this past February.

After the adoption of this new sleep care paradigm, we began discussing how to transform this concept into a viable care model. A common theme of these discussions was that the success of the paradigm requires clear delineation of the roles of different providers, taking into account the potential for consolidation in health care systems, and the creation of new physician payment models. The Board recognized that it would be essential to unify the sleep medicine specialty on a national scale to ensure patient access to sleep specialty care.

Therefore, the Academy made a significant investment in the establishment of the Welltrinsic Sleep Network, a national network connecting board certified sleep medicine physicians and accredited sleep centers to deliver high-quality, integrated care. As an independent corporation, Welltrinsic will negotiate contracts for sleep medicine services with insurers, health care systems and employers to ensure that patients receive high-quality, cost-effective care from network members. Through a partnership with Somnoware, the network also will equip members with a unified data platform that enables sleep specialists to streamline patient management while collecting and reporting outcome data, paving the way for a successful transition from a fee-for-service payment model to value-based care. Furthermore, the network will provide other innovative services, such as an online platform to assist in cost-effective delivery of

cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia, and a telehealth system to expand the reach of sleep specialists to underserved populations.

Welltrinsic is led by an independent board of directors of well-respected, veteran sleep medicine physicians. Yesterday Welltrinsic began offering free network enrollment for board certified sleep medicine physicians, so I encourage you to learn more about what Welltrinsic has to offer you. The Academy Board of Directors believes that the formation and success of this network will be essential for the long-term viability of the sleep medicine specialty.

In light of these important developments, it would be easy to overlook all of the other significant initiatives that the Academy has advanced in the past year. So let me briefly highlight some of these achievements, starting with the publication of the *International Classification of Sleep Disorders, Third Edition* led by Dr. Michael Sateia. It truly was a massive undertaking that required thousands of hours of work, and I know that many of you in this room made a valuable contribution to the project.

This year the Academy also continued our public relations campaign, which has increased national awareness of sleep illnesses and the high quality of care available from sleep specialists. The campaign has produced significant media coverage from high profile outlets such as CNN, the Wall Street Journal, TIME and USA Today. Building on this foundation, we launched the National Healthy Sleep Awareness Project through a cooperative agreement with the CDC. With the support and involvement of other partners, including the Sleep Research Society, we are promoting the achievement of the Healthy People 2020 sleep health objectives. Workgroups comprising leaders of the Academy and our partners are creating a public awareness campaign, developing strategies for health care provider education, and working with the CDC to improve ongoing sleep health surveillance.

I am pleased to report that the Academy has made tremendous progress in our Seniors Sleep Campaign. We secured bipartisan support from two legislators and drafted a sleep apnea screening bill, which was recently introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives. The legislation proposes that a clinically validated screening questionnaire be used during the introductory Welcome to Medicare preventive visit to identify new Medicare beneficiaries who have a high risk for obstructive sleep apnea.

Now we need your assistance to help us move the bipartisan legislation forward. For the bill to pass, we need a significant number of representatives in the U.S. House to co-sponsor the legislation. We also have to secure the support of legislators in the Senate. Although the Academy is working hard to gain this support, it is clear that members of Congress are most responsive to requests that they receive from their own constituents. So I urge you to help us by signing the Seniors Sleep Pledge, which offers a variety of ways in which you can get involved – from simply signing an online petition to setting

up a meeting with your legislator. The pledge allows you to choose your own level of participation. Together our efforts will promote high quality patient centered care for the millions of older adults with undiagnosed obstructive sleep apnea.

One reason we've made significant progress in this initiative is because of our ability to develop relationships with legislators through our Political Action Committee. The PAC helps give you a voice in Washington by providing direct assistance to legislators who are supportive of the sleep medicine field.

As a physician scientist, I recognize that sleep science is foundational to our clinical effectiveness. The Academy has always placed an emphasis on the importance of sleep research, and I am proud to say that we reinforced this commitment earlier in the year by making a five-year, \$10 million pledge to continue supporting the grant programs of the American Sleep Medicine Foundation. I look forward to seeing the results of the strategic research and career development programs that will be supported by this funding.

As I close, I thank each of you for supporting the Academy through your membership and your engagement in our initiatives. The Academy is your professional society, and by working together we will ensure that we continue to advance the field of sleep medicine - taking both small steps and giant leaps. Thank you.