

**OFFICERS**

Jennifer L. Martin, PhD  
*President*

James A. Rowley, MD  
*President-Elect*

Raman K. Malhotra, MD  
*Past President*

Eric J. Olson, MD  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

**DIRECTORS**

Fariha Abbasi-Feinberg, MD

R. Nisha Aurora, MD, MHS

Vishesh K. Kapur, MD, MPH

David C. Kuhlmann, MD

Carol L. Rosen, MD

Anita V. Shelgikar, MD, MHPE

Lynn Marie Trotti, MD, MSc

Emerson M. Wickwire, PhD

Steve Van Hout  
*Executive Director*

October 26, 2022

Tom Fenter, MD, Chief Medical Officer  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi  
3545 Lakeland Drive  
Jackson, MS 39232

Sent via email: [tfenter@bcbsms.com](mailto:tfenter@bcbsms.com)

Dear Dr. Fenter:

I am contacting you on behalf of the Payer Policy Review Committee of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM), a membership organization representing over 10,000 individual physician members and sleep centers. As the leading membership organization for sleep medicine, the AASM sets clinical standards for sleep medicine care by publishing new and updated evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. The Payer Policy Review Committee (PPRC) is comprised of physicians who are experts in the field of sleep medicine and well-versed in AASM guidelines and relevant literature. This committee is charged with communicating recommendations in the AASM guidelines to insurers and to assess alignment of insurers' policies to these guidelines.

In our continuing review of Obstructive Sleep Apnea medical policies, to ensure that sleep facility accreditation is required, we note that while you require that "*Sleep studies must be performed in or by a Network sleep center which has met the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) Standards for Accreditation as outlined in most member's plan documents,*" there are policy exceptions that do not require AASM accreditation of centers performing sleep studies. Specifically, there are exclusions for patients in the *Federal Employees Program (FEP)* and *ASI, dba Southeastern Healthcare Employees Medical Benefit* group plans that do not require AASM or any other recognized accreditation of sleep centers. As these policy exclusions contradict the overarching requirement that network sleep centers conducting sleep studies have AASM accreditation, we would like clarification on your rationale for applying these exclusions to patient populations that belong to certain group plans.

By requiring accreditation for sleep medicine facilities, payers are demonstrating to patients, referring physicians, and other providers and insurers a commitment to providing sleep disorder services to all patients with the highest quality of care. In a growing number of states, accreditation is required for reimbursement of many sleep medicine services as insurers recognize that accreditation leads to improvements in patient care. As these policy exclusions may jeopardize the quality of care that sleep disorder patients receive who go to unaccredited sleep facilities for sleep studies, we urge Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi to remove policy exclusions that limit access to high quality care for all patients, at accredited-in network, sleep facilities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions about this issue or require any additional information, please contact AASM Director of Health Policy, Diedra Gray, at (630) 737-9700 or [dgray@aasm.org](mailto:dgray@aasm.org).

Sincerely,

Kunwar P Vohra, MD, MBA, FAASM  
**Chair, AASM Payer Policy Review Committee**