

Publication of sleep medicine quality measures promotes value-based care

13 March 2015

Today the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) published new quality measures for five common sleep disorders, which represents a landmark achievement in the promotion of high quality, patient-centered care in the medical subspecialty of sleep medicine.

The summary paper, "Measurement of Quality to Improve Care in Sleep Medicine," is published in the March issue of the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine* along with five workgroup papers presenting outcome and process measures to aid in evaluating the quality of care of restless legs syndrome, insomnia, narcolepsy, [obstructive sleep apnea](#) in adults, and obstructive [sleep apnea](#) in children. Each paper describes the methods of development, explains the quality measures in detail and suggests potential implementation strategies.

"The Affordable Care Act is accelerating the U.S. health care system's transition away from a volume-based, fee-for-service payment model by promoting the implementation of alternative payment models that reward physicians for the quality of care provided to their patients," said AASM President Dr. Timothy Morgenthaler. "Implementation of the AASM quality measures will be an essential step to move sleep health care forward in this new era of value-based care."

Morgenthaler added that chronic sleep diseases such as obstructive sleep apnea increase the risk of other costly health complications such as hypertension, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, stroke and depression. Therefore, sleep specialists are uniquely positioned to demonstrate the wide-reaching value of their care.

"The effective treatment of sleep apnea and other sleep diseases is critical to the success of our nation's attempts to reduce health care spending and improve chronic disease management," Morgenthaler said.

The AASM chartered five workgroups of sleep specialists in June 2013 to develop quality measures for assessment and management of common [sleep disorders](#). For each workgroup, a literature review was performed to identify published evidence regarding the measurement of quality, care processes, or validated outcome tools. The AASM requested review of the draft measures and feedback from a variety of stakeholders including sleep specialists, primary care providers, other medical specialists, professional organizations, and patient advocacy groups.

As a result of his extensive experience championing quality improvement for Mayo Clinic, Morgenthaler was selected as chairman of the quality measures task force. In this role, he spearheaded development of the overall measurement strategy, led the education of workgroup members and presented measures to the AASM board of directors.

The final [quality measures](#) were reviewed and approved by the AASM board of directors. The AASM recommends the use of these measures as part of a quality improvement program that will enhance the ability to improve the quality of care for patients with sleep disorders.

Promoting high quality care in [sleep medicine](#) has always been a focus of the AASM, which accredited the first sleep center in 1977 and began developing evidence-based practice standards about 25 years ago. Today more than 2,500 AASM accredited sleep disorders across the U.S. are providing exceptional care for people who suffer from a chronic sleep disease.

It is estimated that about 70 million Americans suffer from [sleep problems](#), with nearly 60 percent having a chronic disorder. One of the most prevalent sleep disorders is obstructive [sleep apnea](#), which afflicts at least 25 million adults in the U.S.

More information: Measurement of Quality to Improve Care in Sleep Medicine, *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, 2015.

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