



American Academy of Sleep Medicine

Michael H. Silber, MBChB

American Academy of Sleep Medicine Past President

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It seems like yesterday when I assumed the presidency of the AASM in Salt Lake City last June. The year has been filled with both the need for strategic planning in many areas as well as the day-to-day activities of a large and vibrant organization. It has been an exciting, meaningful and at times turbulent experience and I am very grateful to the membership for allowing me this opportunity to serve you and the field of sleep.

I have tried to keep focused on our vision statement: The American Academy of Sleep Medicine is *the leader* in setting standards and promoting excellence in sleep medicine health care, education and research. Our activities have been broad and I can only focus on a few of what I regard as the most important achievements of the last year.

As I promised in my speech a year ago, we have been able to bring to completion the three year project to publish the new AASM Manual for the Scoring of Sleep and Associated Events. Accompanying this monograph has been the publication in the JCSM in March of the review articles explaining the rationale for the new rules. Together these documents will provide the future framework for measuring sleep in both clinical and research laboratories. It is hard to express how much effort went into this achievement. More than 75 experts were involved at all levels and the result is truly a production of our academy as a whole. Nevertheless, nothing would have been achieved without the vision and guidance of the steering committee, ably chaired by Con Iber. I thank them especially but also all of you who contributed. I would like to announce that the Board has delayed the requirement that accredited centers and laboratories utilize the new scoring system until July 1st 2008, but we encourage members to change earlier. Also, the new technical specifications for polysomnography recordings will be required to be incorporated in new

PSG equipment purchased after July 1st 2008. In order to assist members with the transition, the AASM will shortly be introducing a Frequently Asked Question section on our website.

There has been considerable activity in the controversial area of portable monitoring, with the AASM taking a proactive stance. Our foundation, the American Sleep medicine Foundation, issued a detailed RFP for a multicenter project to compare portable monitoring for the diagnosis of sleep apnea with laboratory based testing. A large number of sophisticated proposals were received from many leaders in our field. An independent committee selected the proposal of Carol Rosen and Susan Redline and we congratulate them on their success. We await with great interest the results of their study. Nancy Collop and her task force have almost completed their review of current indications and optimal methods for performing portable monitoring and a conference on portable monitoring research priorities, jointly sponsored by the ATS, ACCP, European Respiratory Society and us, is in the final stages of planning. Unexpectedly, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced earlier this year that they planned to re-look at the issue of portable monitoring. The AASM submitted a detailed response and has also had the opportunity to comment on an analysis performed for CMS by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. We especially emphasized that if reimbursement for portable monitoring is to be introduced in the future that it should be restricted to accredited sleep centers and laboratories or to physicians board certified in sleep medicine. The outcome of the CMS review is still awaited but we are cautiously optimistic that it will be favorable to our members and our patients.

On the academic front, much has come to fruition. ACGME continues to accredit new sleep medicine fellowship programs and the first new multidisciplinary examination in sleep medicine, co-sponsored by five boards of the American Board of Medical Specialties, will be held this fall. The AASM is offering 2 board preparation courses as well as a series of webinars to help prepare members for the test. While we have clearly stated that certification by the American Board of Sleep Medicine will continue to be sufficient for directors of AASM accredited sleep centers and laboratories, we encourage all eligible members to take the new examination, as it is possible that the landscape of sleep medicine may change in the future, resulting in the examination becoming important in areas such as practice privileges and reimbursement.

An exciting new initiative on the academic front is the introduction of a Recognition Program for Comprehensive Academic Sleep Programs of Distinction. The AASM is committed to the concept of academic sleep centers of the future becoming independent interdisciplinary units outside of traditional divisions or departments and I encourage all those interested in this vision to read my editorial in SLEEP in March 2007. As a step towards this goal, the AASM intends to recognize those academic sleep programs that have made major strides in this direction. Successful programs will have the opportunity to compete for a yearly one year ASMF grant to contribute to the sponsorship of a fellow for training in sleep

research and all recognized programs will be awarded a yearly travel grant to permit one of their fellows to travel to the annual SLEEP meeting. A full description of the program and an application sheet are available on our web site. The Board has created a new standing committee, the Academic Affairs Committee which will have as one of its responsibilities the administration of this program. The new committee will also continue the work of the Presidential Committee on Medical School Education which, under the leadership of Clete Kushida, has made major strides towards its goal of establishing sleep training programs in every medical school in the United States. I am pleased to announce that one of our past presidents, Andy Chesson has graciously agreed to chair the new committee.

During the last year the Board of Directors established a conflict of interest policy for the Academy and our Foundation, defining the nature of our relationships with industry. Several years ago we set strict but fair conflict of interest policies for members serving on the Board, committees or task forces as well as for our editors and senior administrative staff. I have had the honor of chairing the COI committee for several years and would like to briefly comment on our experience. I believe we have been proactive in defining our standards and have anticipated recent concerns from the public about improper relationships between organizations, individuals and industry. The AASM is widely recognized for its high ethical standards and this has resulted in multiple benefits with our statements and standards being widely respected. I believe it essential that we continue along this path.

Under the leadership of Richard Berry, the American Sleep Medicine Foundation has grown beyond recognition over the past year. We are very grateful to the American Board of Sleep Medicine who donated a large sum of money to establish an endowment which will be devoted to funding a year of research for a sleep medicine fellow who has completed a year's clinical fellowship. The Academy has also transferred a capital amount to set up the nidus of a separate endowment. A strategic plan has been developed with a new organizational structure. In an era of dwindling research funding, the ASMF is committed to assisting trainees and junior faculty in developing research careers.

I am pleased to report that the new section structure is evolving well. As you will recall, this has been the first year that the AASM has organized its sections in terms of the major diagnostic categories of sleep disorders. Most of the new sections have been active, involving themselves in activities such as reviewing course proposals for the SLEEP meeting and selecting awardees for the best submitted abstract in each area. I strongly encourage all members to join one or more sections, to attend the section meetings to be held later this week, and to become active in section activities.

The AASM remains involved in the area of sleep technology. We are working actively with the AAST and the BRPT in supporting technology education and certification. Our A-STEP program continues to flourish

and I am pleased to report that the BRPT has included it in certain of their requirements for registry examination eligibility. The CoAPSG, jointly sponsored by the AAST, BRPT and the AASM, continues to accredit sleep technology training programs. We continue to intervene in state legislation to protect the profession of sleep technology and have had some notable successes.

None of these multiple activities could have occurred without our devoted staff. I recently had the opportunity to meet with all our staff in Chicago and came away inspired by their enthusiasm and commitment. Many activities occur below the radar screen and the amount of time and effort put in is not always evident. An example is our wonderful new web site designed by our IT department. I would like to thank Jennifer Markkanen, our assistant executive-director, for her incredible knowledge, organizational skills and efficiency. We are privileged to have Jerry Barrett as our executive-director. I cannot over stress how his experience, wisdom and managerial skills have made the AASM what it is today. I do not know how I could have functioned this last year without his guidance and council. Thank you, Jerry for all you do for us!

I have enjoyed this year (most days!) and have felt privileged to share in guiding this Academy as your President. Thank you for giving me the opportunity.