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**American Academy of Sleep Medicine**

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**Remarks of Clete A. Kushida, MD, PhD**  
**Groundbreaking Ceremony**  
**American Academy of Sleep Medicine Headquarters**  
**Darien, Illinois**  
**July 9, 2009**  
**3:00 p.m.**

Thank you, Jerry.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to everyone for gathering today in Darien to commemorate this historic event. We are fortunate to be joined by many of our partners in the development of the new national headquarters for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

I would like to thank Dr. Susie Esther, the Past President of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine who unfortunately could not be here today due to a family emergency. The proposal to establish a headquarters for the Academy was initiated during Susie's tenure as President, and she was instrumental in turning the proposal into a reality. I also thank Dr. Pat Strollo, the President-Elect of the Academy, for traveling from Pittsburgh. The completion of the national headquarters will occur during Dr. Strollo's presidency, and this will mark a new chapter in our Academy's history. I also thank Dr. David Bruce, a member of the Academy's Board of Directors and President of the American Sleep Medicine Foundation for joining us today. Lastly, I'd like to thank the Academy staff, particularly the Academy's Executive Director, Mr. Jerry Barrett, for his tireless efforts in the meticulous planning of our new headquarters.

I would like to welcome the representatives from Wight Construction who are here today: Chairman and CEO Mark Wight, and Senior Vice President and Director of Design Kevin Havens. This talented team at Wight presented their vision and developed a functional design for the building that will serve us for many years. Additionally, their commitment to environmentally-conscious design will result in us helping to conserve the earth's natural resources.

I would also like to welcome the many representatives here today from the city of Darien and the Chamber of Commerce. We are fortunate to have such a strong civic partner, and appreciate the assistance provided to make the construction of our new headquarters possible. We look forward to being responsible corporate partners and good neighbors with the city, and to the lasting relationship the Academy will enjoy with Darien.

It is a great pleasure to be with you today to inaugurate the construction of the new national office for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.

The commencement of this building project is a time for us to reflect on the history of the Academy, to look forward to an exciting future, a future shared cooperatively with Wight & Company and the community of Darien.

A little over 50 years ago, Dr. Nathaniel Kleitman and his student Dr. Eugene Aserinsky identified rapid eye movements during sleep, a new stage of sleep later called REM sleep. This seminal discovery at the University of Chicago – fittingly not far from the Academy's new home – spurred investigation into the mechanisms of sleep, and laid the foundation for the present fields of sleep research and clinical sleep medicine.

The origins of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine can be traced to 1964, when my mentors, Drs. William Dement and Christian Guilleminault, established the first narcolepsy clinic at Stanford University. This clinic evolved to the first full-service sleep disorders clinic, and has served a model for high-quality patient care that is the hallmark of our accreditation and a primary tenet of the Academy's mission.

As the sleep field evolved, the Association of Sleep Disorders Centers, an early precursor to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, was formed in 1975. After a merger with the Clinical Sleep Society and a reorganization, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, as we know it today, was established in 1987.

Despite a relatively short time frame, the Academy has a rich history, and the field has matured into a recognized, independent subspecialty within the medical community. In only 34 years, we have developed into a strong association, with more than 8,000 members from all areas of sleep medicine: physicians, clinicians, researchers, technologists, dentists, nurses and other professionals. The Academy has also become the main accrediting body for sleep disorders facilities, and we currently accredit more than 1,700 centers and laboratories across the United States.

The Academy has also expanded its scope in that time to serve as the primary advocate for the sleep field, representing the interest of sleep specialists on issues related to health policy, reimbursement and practice management, and serving as the host of educational programs and resources that enhance the understanding of sleep and sleep disorders. Recognizing its roots in research, the Academy has so far committed more than 3 million dollars to advancing the understanding of sleep and improving the quality of sleep health care through the support of grant opportunities.

These are broad strokes that reflect the overall mission of the Academy and touch on its influence within the practice of medicine. It takes a dedicated Academy staff of 51 full-time and 28 part-time individuals to administer the many programs, initiatives and services the Academy provides to its members, to the medical community, and to patients with sleep disorders. As we continue to promote the exchange of new ideas and advance

the field further, the impact of the Academy will remain vital, the number of activities will certainly continue to expand, and the scope of the organization will grow.

The Academy leadership recognized that our field and the organization were at a pivotal juncture, and made a commitment to ensuring that the Academy is firm in its position as the authoritative voice of sleep medicine so that it is poised to further influence policy and expand its programming to meet member needs. A careful assessment of our organization's current activities balanced with a vision for the future provided a clear picture of the infrastructure required to assume these challenges and to achieve even greater goals for sleep medicine – and this vision included a state-of-the-art national headquarters.

Our gathering today on ground yet unbroken, looking forward, symbolizes in a sense, the ongoing vision of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine: Cognizant of our past and firmly established in the present, but with an awareness of our leading role in shaping the future.

From so many perspectives, this new building site is one of great significance, incorporating community, technology, vision, and the conception of our field nearby at the University of Chicago, so it is indeed fitting that we establish our future here. Thank you allowing us to share our vision with you, and we look forward to turning today's dream into a reality.