



News Release

American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
Working for the Best Ear, Nose, and Throat Care

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AAO-HNS Applauds Final CMS Decision to Allow Home Sleep Testing *Patients Now Have a Choice in Sleep Diagnosis and Treatment*

Alexandria, VA – The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) is applauding the decision by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to update the current national coverage determination regarding the diagnosis and treatment of obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and allow home testing with Type II, III, and IV home sleep devices.

This decision, announced yesterday (March 13, 2008) via Decision Memo on CMS' website (<http://www.cms.hhs.gov>), will make it easier for patients to receive high quality diagnostic testing and treatment for sleep disorders by allowing them to begin the diagnosis process in the comfort and convenience of their homes.

In addition to allowing testing with Type II, III, and IV devices, CMS will allow a 12-week trial of continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) for anyone suspected of having OSA, and continue this coverage if the patient experiences improvements in their OSA during this period of time.

CMS was originally asked to reconsider this national coverage determination policy through a direct request by the AAO-HNS in 2007. The reconsideration process included a year of review, expert testimony before CMS, and multiple public comment periods. It resolves current system limitations in sleep disorder diagnosis and treatment and ensures that quality care can reach all patients dealing with sleep disorders.

Obstructive sleep apnea is a pervasive, profoundly dangerous, debilitating, and largely under-diagnosed disease. In the United States alone, it is estimated that many as 24 percent of men and 9 percent of women suffer from the disorder, increasing their risk of auto accidents, stroke, heart failure, and death, while resulting in a lower quality of life and less productive workplace experience. Furthermore, it is estimated that 75 to 80 percent of all cases of OSA that could benefit from treatment remain undiagnosed.

Under the previous system, patient diagnostic testing was hindered by a policy that limited coverage to facility-based polysomnography in a sleep laboratory. That system created access problems for some patients due to a high level of demand, a lack of sleep laboratories in some areas, and discomfort among patients who are uncomfortable with testing in a lab.

A full text of the decision can be viewed at CMS' website at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdecisionmemo.asp?id=204>.

Reporters who wish to speak with an expert on sleep disorders can contact Matt Daigle at 1-703-519-1563, or at newsroom@entnet.org.

About the AAO-HNS

The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (www.entnet.org), one of the oldest medical associations in the nation, represents more than 12,000 physicians and allied health professionals who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The Academy serves its members by facilitating the advancement of the science and art of medicine related to otolaryngology and by representing the specialty in governmental and socioeconomic issues. The organization's mission: "Working for the Best Ear, Nose, and Throat Care."

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