

The New York State Society of Sleep Medicine



NYSSSM

December 23, 2005

URGENT – PLEASE READ BELOW

Dear Colleague:

The New York State Education Department and Board of Respiratory Therapy are considering a new interpretation of the respiratory therapy statute that will restrict the practice of specific sleep-related medical services to licensed respiratory therapists (RTs) and will essentially eliminate the sleep technology field.

If finalized, this interpretation compromises the ability of your sleep facility to provide adequate and timely care for sleep disorders patients. Specifically, the interpretation prohibits non-hospital-based sleep facilities from conducting polysomnographic testing unless performed by a licensed RT, and prevents hospital-based facilities from performing CPAP and Bi-PAP titrations or administering oxygen unless performed by a licensed RT. Clearly, this statute will place an excessive burden on sleep facilities because there is an existing shortage of licensed RTs and because RTs lack comprehensive training in sleep technology. We will be deprived of the personnel who are most qualified to perform the technical evaluation of sleep disorders vital to the success of our practice.

In response to this distressing turn of events, the New York State Society of Sleep Medicine (NYSSSM) is launching a significant lobbying effort to garner the political and legislative support needed to protect the interests of all sleep medicine professionals in our state. Your support of this effort is critical, as the cost of this massive undertaking is expected to exceed \$40,000.

I urge you to make a contribution at one of these two levels, which will also make you a member of the NYSSSM:

- **Individual: \$100 or more**
- **Center/Laboratory: \$250 or more**

To show your support of the sleep field in New York, simply return the donation form included with this letter.

Eleven other states have recognized the necessity for political intervention and are considering public policy changes that will protect the practice of sleep technology; New York must follow their lead.

Our ability to encourage a swift and decisive legislative response depends upon a united and vocal show of support from New York's sleep medicine community. In addition to supporting the lobbying effort of the NYSSSM, it is imperative that you contact your state legislators and educate them about the urgency of this situation. Let them know that this issue dramatically affects our ability to provide quality health care for New York's citizens.

Thank you for supporting the NYSSSM with your prompt response to this pressing matter. Your active involvement in this effort is critical to our success.

Sincerely,

Daniel I. Rifkin, MD
President