

### AASM Spearheads Sleep Community Relief Response to Hurricane Katrina

On Monday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast of the United States and wrought utter devastation throughout the entire region. The aftermath of the storm created widespread flooding, resulting in almost complete submersion of cities and causing ruin of homes, hospitals, schools and other facilities. In the first week, damage estimates were estimated to exceed \$30 billion. Federal agencies expect that the area will not be habitable until early October.

With the entire Gulf Coast in a state of catastrophe, many sought opportunities to come to the aid of those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Specifically, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine evaluated the best way to assist its 77 members and the 39 accredited sleep centers in the area as well as patients who receive care at sleep centers and require therapeutic equipment and the general public. The American Sleep Medicine Foundation on August 31, 2005, established the Hurricane Disaster Relief fund to provide assistance to members who face the daunting task of rebuilding and repairing offices and sleep centers destroyed by the storm. The fund also aids patients who lost therapeutic equipment because they were evacuated to other areas.

Immediately after the hurricane struck the region, the ASMF sent urgent appeals to member of the AASM encouraging each of them, as individuals or as a center, to make a donation to the Hurricane Disaster Relief fund. The ASMF also worked with industry to secure refurbished CPAP machines and identified shelters and sleep centers at which these machines could be distributed to patients displaced by the hurricane. The ASMF will continue distributing the funds and equipment to members, centers and patients throughout the fall as they commence rebuilding efforts and return to the area.

### AASM Introduces Training Program for Sleep Technology

As sleep technology grows as a field and strives for formal recognition as an independent allied health profession, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine identified the need for further and immediate development of sleep technology to ensure these goals and to protect the field from on-going legislative efforts that threaten to limit the scope of practice for sleep technologists.

As a first step, the AASM commissioned a Polysomnographic Technologist Issues Committee to develop a three-part track that includes standardized education and on-the-job training programs in a clinical setting. The committee spent several months developing this program, the Intensive Education Programs in Sleep Technology, for sleep technologists with the aim that it would not only provide comprehensive education and training but also establish high standards of professionalism, encourage certification and increase the number of highly qualified sleep technologists.

In August 2005 the AASM introduced the first component of this program to its membership and to the Association of Polysomnographic Technologists. The first component is a didactic 80-hour course that provides in-depth instruction in sleep technology in addition to basic education in sleep. After completion of the course, the individual must pass a required competency examination to receive certification as a Polysomnographic Technology Trainee.

The Polysomnographic Technologist Issues Committee developed and adopted standards for accreditation of these didactic courses that define the minimum requirements in specific areas such as personnel, resources, curriculum, assessment, admission and fair practice. The Standards for Accreditation of Intensive Educational Programs in Sleep Technology as well as the Application for Accreditation of Intensive Educational Programs in Sleep Technology are available on the AASM Web site at [www.aasmnet.org](http://www.aasmnet.org).

The AASM began accepting applications for accreditation in late fall with the program accreditation beginning in January 2006. After the introduction of this first component, the AASM will sequentially unveil the other components.

After successful completion of the course, the Polysomnographic Technology Trainee will enter the second component of the program, which is 18 months of intensive in-laboratory training. During the first six months, the Trainee will work under the direct supervision of a trained technologist and receive additional instruction from a series of computer-based self-assessment modules that are based on the domains of practice. After six months and the successful completion of six modules, the trainee becomes a Polysomnographic Technician and can work independently. The technician then must complete 12 months of additional work experience plus the completion of an additional six modules. The AASM will maintain records of the course and self-assessment modules, which will provide a national credentialing verification system for polysomnographic technologists.

Once the requirements for the first and second components are satisfied, the technician qualifies for the third component, which is sitting for the Comprehensive Registry Examination for Polysomnographic Technologists offered by the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists. Candidates have 36 months from the time of completion of the didactic course to pass the examination and become a Registered Polysomnographic Technologist.

The AASM is fully committed to this education, training and certification initiative and to supporting engagement in legislative efforts to protect the sleep technology profession.

### Tri-Societies Task Force to Assume New Project

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine, the American College of Chest Physicians and the American Thoracic Society

have for the past several years participated in a tri-society partnership to address issues of mutual concern and topics involving each organization. The tri-society group published two review papers that addressed measuring agreement between diagnostic devices and home diagnosis of sleep apnea and a clinical guideline for the use of portable monitoring devices in the investigation of obstructive sleep apnea. The tri-society partnership also produced a letter of understanding among the organizations in support of the independent profession of sleep technology and in opposition to legislation and/or administrative regulations that limit the scope of practice of a sleep technologist.

The AASM, ACCP and ATS are again partnering as part of the tri-society relationship. Representatives from the three organizations will form a task force, chaired by Nancy Collop, MD, that will develop an accompanying review paper and clinical practice guideline that clearly define how portable monitoring should be used in special situations that were outlined in the first review paper and guideline.

The AASM is appreciative of support demonstrated by pulmonary medicine and looks forward to working with both societies and the community.

### **AASM Membership is Your Most Important Investment**

**A**s a physician, researcher, technologist or health care professional in the sleep medicine field, you continually seek ways to grow your practice, better serve your patients and further your professional knowledge not only of current research and findings but also of business and practice-related information.

Just as you provide resources, information and knowledge to your patients, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine is the number one professional resource for sleep medicine specialists. Committed to advancing the field, the AASM spearheaded efforts for formal recognition as an independent medical subspecialty, advocated for new sleep codes and fair reimbursement, and lobbied for legislative protection of sleep technologists. Committed to advancing the practice of sleep medicine, the AASM offers a multitude of courses, grants, journals and newsletters, and other services to help physicians, researchers and care providers develop and excel professionally. Clearly, the AASM works for its members.

Membership in the AASM is a wise and efficient investment – for your practice, staff, and self. All members will receive invoices in mid to late October for 2006 membership dues and are encouraged to join or renew their membership. Beginning October 1, new members can join and existing members can renew online at [www.aasmnet.org](http://www.aasmnet.org).

### **Renew Your Subscription to the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine Today**

**W**ith the formal recognition of sleep as an independent medical specialty and continued growth in the field, there has never before been a greater need for a peer-reviewed journal that is committed to disseminating papers of direct applicability and relevance to a clinical practice. The Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine (JCSM) is the premiere source for this timely and relevant information as well as insight into the sleep field. So far, non-members of the AASM have enjoyed a complementary subscription to JCSM.

In the inaugural issues of JCSM, readers have obtained a glimpse of how thoroughly it covers the areas of applied sleep science that matter most to their practice, research and training. Certainly this includes the latest research and scientific investigations; but as you have seen, there is so much more packed inside each issue of JCSM: clinical trials and reviews, commentaries and debates, case reports and other relevant information related to the sleep field.

However, free subscriptions to the JCSM for non-members of the American Academy of Sleep Medicine expire at the end of this year. Non-members will receive subscription renewal notices shortly and are encouraged to promptly return it to ensure timely delivery of this valuable resource.

### **AASM Broadens Its Offering of Educational Courses**

**T**he American Academy of Sleep Medicine is offering two courses this fall and winter for sleep medicine physicians and sleep technologists that will broaden knowledge and offer unique opportunities for professional development.

The Essentials of Sleep Technology: CPAP Titration course is a new offering from the AASM. Designed for sleep technologists, this course is a review of sleep-disordered breathing with a primary focus on CPAP titration. The course will satisfy the requirements of the South Carolina medical examiners declaratory ruling regarding educational and credentialing requirements for non-Registered Polysomnographic Technologists. While this course will initially only be offered in South Carolina, the AASM expects to host this course in multiple locations as sleep technologists face legislative regulations and battles throughout the country. This inaugural course will be held on Saturday, November 5, 2005, at the Dixon Auditorium at Roper St. Francis Hospital in Charleston, South Carolina. For more information, visit [www.aasmnet.org](http://www.aasmnet.org).

The AASM is please to again offer the Management of a Sleep Disorders Center course. The course will be held February 10-12, 2006, at the San Diego Hilton. This course is a comprehensive primer for physicians and sleep center staff who are seeking a relevant and practical overview of sleep center management, health policy issues and other topics critical to running a sleep center. More information about the course, including the outline, faculty and registration information, will be detailed on the AASM Web site.

### **Welcome New Accredited Center Members**

**O**n the following page is a listing of all new accredited center members since May 1, 2005. If you would like for your accredited center to take advantage of these benefits and more please contact the membership department at [bfairchild@aasmnet.org](mailto:bfairchild@aasmnet.org) or (708) 492-0930.