Collaborative summit explores models to improve patient care for sleep apnea
Representatives from 14 medical, nurse practitioner and patient groups discuss diagnostic and treatment pathways

DARIEN, Ill. – Nov. 27, 2018 – In Chicago on Saturday, Nov. 10, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) hosted 35 representatives from 14 medical societies, nurse practitioner associations and patient advocacy groups for a one-day Sleep-Disordered Breathing Collaboration Summit to discuss strategies to improve the diagnosis and treatment of obstructive sleep apnea.

Participants explored new and innovative clinical approaches to address the problem of undiagnosed sleep apnea. A report previously commissioned by the AASM estimates that 29.4 million adults in the U.S. have obstructive sleep apnea, with 23.5 million of them currently undiagnosed.

“The purpose of this summit was to bring together a multi-disciplinary group of stakeholders to encourage innovation and promote improved access to care for the millions of adults and children who have undiagnosed sleep apnea,” said AASM President Dr. Douglas B. Kirsch. “It is my hope that this summit will be a springboard for ongoing collaboration that will promote the expansion of high quality, patient-centered care for sleep apnea.”

Currently there are about 6,400 board-certified sleep medicine physicians in the U.S., with many of them working at the 2,600 sleep centers that have earned accreditation from the AASM. The goal of the summit was to discuss how the sleep field could expand access to care by involving primary care physicians, advanced practice providers and other medical specialists in a team-based approach to address the sleep apnea crisis.

The AASM is developing a report that will summarize the challenges and promising strategies identified during the summit. Ideas that were suggested by participants include on-site training for providers at family practice clinics, online education and weekend continuing medical education (CME) teaching sessions for physician specialists, development of a sleep certification program for nurse practitioners and physician assistants, and greater use of telemedicine.

“It was encouraging that there was widespread consensus among the summit participants that the prevalence of undiagnosed sleep apnea is a serious problem that requires multi-disciplinary, collaborative innovation in health care education, training and clinical practice,” said AASM Immediate Past President Dr. Ilene Rosen, who was the chair of the Planning Committee for the summit. “We received a wealth of valuable input from the participants, who were incredibly engaged and passionate about sharing their expertise and ideas for how we can deliver better and more accessible care for people who have sleep apnea.”
The AASM thanks the following organizations for their collaborative participation:

- American Academy of Neurology
- American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Alliance for Healthy Sleep
- American Association of Nurse Practitioners
- American College of Cardiology
- American College of Chest Physicians
- American Osteopathic Association
- American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery
- American Thoracic Society
- Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
- MyApnea.org/ Sleep Apnea Patient-Centered Outcomes Network
- Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine

Themes discussed during the summit will be explored further at upcoming AASM events, including Sleep Medicine Trends 2019, Feb. 15-17 in Anaheim, California, and a new Sleep Medicine Disruptors course, which will be streamed live in the spring.

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Note: Participation does not represent an endorsement of the summit or of the specific strategies that were discussed by an organization’s representatives.

For more information about the Sleep-Disordered Breathing Collaboration Summit, or to request an interview with an AASM spokesperson, please contact Thomas Heffron, Senior Director of Communications and Advocacy, at theffron@aasm.org or (630) 737-9700.

**About the American Academy of Sleep Medicine**
Established in 1975, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) improves sleep health and promotes high quality, patient-centered care through advocacy, education, strategic research, and practice standards. The AASM has a combined membership of 10,000 accredited member sleep centers and individual members, including physicians, scientists and other health care professionals (https://aasm.org/).