



2015/2016 Strategic Plan

American Association of Sleep Technologists 2015/2016 Strategic Plan

Important changes in the U.S. health care system have had a significant impact on the field of sleep medicine and the profession of sleep technology since the American Association of Sleep Technologists (AAST) board of directors drafted its 2012 Strategic Plan.

The focus of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which was signed into law in March 2010, has been the need for cost-containment in the health care sector. This has had a disruptive effect on the field of sleep medicine, as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has repeatedly reduced physician reimbursement rates for sleep medicine codes, particularly those for services related to in-lab overnight polysomnography. At the same time, third party administrator requirements for home sleep apnea testing (HSAT) are expanding, and in some regions testing has been driven to national HSAT companies.

Over the last several years the field of sleep medicine has seen a transition from a procedure-based model to an outcomes-based framework that currently focuses on long-term patient care and treatment compliance. The AAST board of directors recognizes that these changes, as well as others that are on the horizon, are having a profound impact on the profession of sleep technology. The role of the sleep technologist is changing as we take on expanded responsibilities related to advanced testing and treatment modalities, patient education, follow-up care, disease management, and outcomes data collection. These changes provide us with an opportunity to expand the role of the sleep technologist to meet the growing need for sleep-related patient care and to provide resources and education for others performing a variety of roles in the care of patients with sleep disorders.

The AAST has developed the 2015 Strategic Plan to help guide the profession through this transition. This plan will help the AAST fulfill its vision, which is “*Advocating for advanced education and expertise for sleep professionals that are commensurate with a key role in sleep health.*”

The AAST believes that the greatest challenge they face over the next three years is preparing and expanding the membership to succeed and thrive in the changing landscape of sleep health.

2015 GOAL 1: The AAST will be the authority defining the profession of sleep technology and the skills required to meet current expectations for provision of healthcare by sleep technologists/professionals.

Objective A: Define the expanding profession of sleep technology.

1. Revise and disseminate the AAST Core Purpose, Mission Statement, Vision, and Statement of Values.
2. Develop a distinct identity for the profession to expand and brand the AAST position in the industry.
3. Expand essential skill sets for the changing practice of sleep medicine and technology.
4. Define the role of the sleep care manager and patient coordinator and provide understanding for the value of these roles.

5. Enhance the role of the sleep technologist in the evaluation, implementation and management of new technologies.
6. Develop a task force that includes key stakeholders to establish position statements and policy whitepapers regarding provision of healthcare by sleep professionals.

Objective B: Identify and recruit others providing care and support services for patients with sleep disorders.

1. Identify all aspects of the profession and practitioners providing sleep care services and their educational needs.
2. Develop a structured approach for positioning the AAST to meet the educational needs of all roles identified.

2015 Goal 2: The AAST will develop and define roles in advanced testing and treatment, patient education and outcomes-based disease management and compliance.

Objective A: Develop and support higher education pathways necessary to assure appropriate technological skills and clinical knowledge necessary for care of the complex patient.

1. Develop a core curriculum that encompasses changes in technology and practice.
2. Promote the need for higher education.
3. Provide resources for educators and educational programs to meet the expanded needs of the new patient care paradigm.
4. Develop standards, guidelines and competencies to encompass advanced technologies and roles.

Objective B: Develop educational resources for long-term patient care and follow-up and specific protocols for sleep professionals that address the management of sleep disorders and co-morbidities.

1. Establish a task force to review Practice Parameters and Clinical Practice Guidelines to extract specific disease management requirements.
2. Develop educational resources for disease management.
3. Organize educational resources to target core and other providers that require information and education.

Objective C: Establish guidelines for tracking short term and long-term patient compliance and outcomes.

1. Organize and categorize the information needed for outcomes data management.
2. Develop educational resources for electronic health record (EHR) technology, medical charts, data extraction, data tracking, database management systems and state of the art storage technology, etc.

2015 Goal 3: The AAST will set the professional standards for technologists and others providing patient care in the sleep medicine setting.

Objective A: Build awareness of AAST Guidelines and Competencies and Accreditation Standards and Practice Parameters.

1. Establish a communication/education series to inform the membership on the importance of providing care that is based on established standards and guidelines.
2. Familiarize the medical community with the AAST Guidelines and Competencies.
3. Survey members on changes that are impacting their center, develop resources to meet new needs, and share this information with the membership.

Objective B: Promote the guidelines, competencies and educational resources that the AAST has developed to meet membership needs for all practitioners in sleep technology.

1. Determine who our stakeholders are and develop a plan to meet their educational needs.
2. Implement a marketing plan that targets all stakeholders and provides appropriate information and resources for each area of practice within the profession.
3. Implement a comprehensive campaign that delivers a consistent message.

2015 Goal 4: The AAST will continue to be the educational leader for sleep professionals and support staff.

Objective A: Develop educational tools and resources in the areas of sleep center testing, Home Sleep Apnea Testing (HSAT), patient education, treatment, oral appliance titration, coding and reimbursement, longitudinal patient care, compliance and follow-up, accreditation and offer guidance related to regulatory compliance.

1. Develop guidelines, competencies and educational resources for advanced technologies and practices including patient care, advanced therapies, pediatrics, HSAT, compliance measurement and tracking and sleep DME practices.
2. Improve the AAST website to make information more accessible for members and non-members seeking information and educational opportunities.
3. Incorporate advanced topics in the content presented at courses and the annual meeting.
4. Emphasize the importance of patient education by training sleep professionals to educate others.
5. Offer continuing education credits (CECs) for all the educational pieces in this plan.

Objective B: Educate sleep professionals about requirements related to licensing and certification.

1. Utilize the regulatory and legislative activities of the AAST to understand state licensing issues.
2. Increase communication with the state sleep societies on licensing, rulemaking and reimbursement issues.
3. Provide educational resources on rulemaking and coding.
4. Post licensing, certification and regulator rules on the AAST website or providing links where they can be reviewed.

2015 GOAL 5: The AAST will foster professional relationships and maintain coalitions within the sleep medicine community to promote and advance the sleep care profession.

Objective A: Expand scope of collaborative involvement with national sleep, allied health, education, and accrediting organizations and others including industry representatives.

1. Expand formal communication relationships with pertinent stakeholders.
2. Develop joint statements on topics of consensus with other organizations.
3. Offer AAST liaisons to other sleep organizations and groups to facilitate communication and common purpose.
4. Request support from industry representatives to improve communication from the sleep medicine community to the AAST BoD.
5. Collaborate with the CoA PSG, ABSM and the BRPT to raise the educational level and eliminate on the job pathways for entry level into the profession.
6. Encourage accrediting bodies to require appropriately trained and credentialed technologists for accredited sleep centers and HSAT programs.

Objective B: Provide ongoing support and educational resources to state sleep societies.

1. Make as much educational material as possible available to the state sleep societies.
2. Increase communications with state sleep societies by providing speakers and materials for meetings.
3. Provide avenues for state sleep society leaders to interact and share best practices.
4. Continue to address state licensure issues.

2015 GOAL 6: The AAST will improve communications with the membership and the sleep medicine community.

Objective A: Keep members informed of the changing environment in sleep medicine and technology and provide opportunities for involvement in AAST initiatives.

1. Increase communications to the membership through regular updates, presidential messages, website updates and constant contact messages.
2. Publish updates regarding AAST activities on a blog, social media and industry publications.
3. Provide resources for members to educate the public and promote the sleep profession.
4. Recruit new members from allied health care professions.

Objective B: Expand opportunities for membership interaction and feedback.

1. Include a request for feedback, comments and questions as a part of all membership communication.
2. Actively solicit member input through surveys, email and social media.

2015 GOAL 7: The AAST will invest in leadership development.

Objective A: Utilize assessment tools to determine development needs for the board of directors.

1. Develop orientation and evaluation tools for the Board of Directors
2. Assess leadership development needs to reorganize standing BoD committees to meet strategic development needs for the organization.
3. Align AAST resources with strategic priorities.

Objective B: Review and update processes, documents and assessment tools for volunteer participation.

1. Develop job descriptions for officers, directors, appointed representatives, committee chairs and committee members.
2. Revise and update the policy manual.
3. Review and evaluate necessary changes to the bylaws.

Objective C: Annually review standing committee structure and mandates to ensure they meet the needs of the organization in the changing professional environment.

1. Evaluate each committee to ensure that it is still relevant and that its mission/purpose still exists.
2. Expand the annual evaluation process scale and documentation requirements for committee chairs and members to improve consistency.
3. Improve communication with the committees and assist with setting the agenda by assigning specific jobs to each committee.

Objective D: Develop and implement a program to identify, recruit, train and utilize volunteers effectively at all levels.

1. Strengthen orientation, training and development tools and processes for committee leaders and members.
2. Hold leadership conferences to provide relevant training for the board of directors and committee chairs and members.