

Definition

The Medical Director of a sleep disorders center or laboratory shall be a licensed physician who has special interest and knowledge in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders. The Medical Director should be certified by ABMS or ABSM in sleep medicine or have equivalent training and experience. This physician should be responsible for the quality, safety, and appropriateness of the sleep center and/or laboratory services provided and require that these services be ordered by a physician who has medical responsibility for the patient.

Duties And Responsibilities

1. The Medical Director is responsible for the delivery of sleep center and/or laboratory services and is accountable to the Medical Staff for the quality of patient services delivered by the sleep center staff and all other health professionals providing such care and/or diagnostic testing. As a result, sleep technologists should work under the direction of a qualified Medical Director at all times in order to assure their competency and to maximize their capabilities as described in their scope of practice.
2. The Medical Director provides 24-hour availability, including, where necessary, an appropriately qualified designee(s) to share these responsibilities or assume them in the Director's absence.
3. The Medical Director is readily available and interacts regularly with sleep laboratory personnel, promoting bedside and laboratory problem-solving and guidance.
4. The Medical Director positions the sleep center and/or laboratory to be successful in the changing health-care environment by championing cost-effective policies and procedures, while assuring optimal delivery of sleep diagnostic and therapeutic services in a continuum inside and outside of the hospital. The Medical Director has a special responsibility for developing and managing patient care protocols that guide and permit independent decision-making by sleep technologists, such as protocols for clinical assessment and treatment of patients.
5. The Medical Director participates in the quality improvement program of the sleep center/laboratory and the hospital, assuring proper allocation of sleep disorder therapies and diagnostic services through appropriate audit techniques.
6. The Medical Director participates in the development, evaluation, and introduction of new sleep medicine services, equipment, and procedures and also monitors current sleep medicine services for their continued medical usefulness.
7. The Medical Director facilitates continuing education in the diagnosis and treatment of sleep disorders for physicians, sleep technologists, sleep technology students, registered nurses, respiratory therapists, administrators, patients, and the community.
8. The Medical Director coordinates and facilitates professional relationships between the sleep center/laboratory and hospital administration, the medical staff, nursing, respiratory care, pharmacy, emergency care unit, critical care units, post-anesthesia recovery rooms, home health agencies, and other departments and agencies that utilize sleep medicine services.

9. The Medical Director audits physician performance in prescribing sleep disorder therapies in conjunction with the appropriate governing body of the medical staff.
10. The Medical Director provides consultation to physicians with respect to availability and appropriateness of requested sleep diagnostic and therapeutic services.
11. The Medical Director shares responsibility with and provides medical expertise to the administrative/technical director of the sleep center/laboratory in matters regarding:
 - equipment
 - space
 - personnel
 - discharge planning
 - safety
 - policies and procedures
 - supplies
 - patient care protocols
 - budget
 - case management
 - record keeping
 - preventive maintenance
 - infection control
 - fiscal and regulatory agencies
12. The Medical Director, as the agent of the medical staff, is responsible for seeing that the sleep medicine services are in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, as well as the requirements of the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).
13. The Medical Director assures the quality and safety of the sleep studies, including:
 - a. Ensuring the quality of the testing performed in the sleep laboratory.
 - b. Deciding what types of testing will be performed in the laboratory and what equipment will be used.
 - c. Selecting the normal reference values appropriate for the patient population studied in the laboratory.
 - d. Being responsible for the quality of review and interpretation of test results.
 - e. Deciding the training and/or credential requirements and evaluating the performance of the technical personnel of the laboratory.
 - f. Minimizing any risks to and managing any complications in the patients tested in the laboratory and ensuring the safe performance of sleep diagnostic testing and administration of therapies.
 - g. Developing written protocols for all testing procedures.
 - h. Being a consultant to other physicians to offer advice on appropriate tests to order in a given clinical situation and on appropriate use of the laboratory facilities.
 - i. Developing and implementing procedures to prevent the transmission of infection by the laboratory equipment and personnel and to prevent other hazards to patients and staff.

The ACCP Sleep Institute mission is to promote sleep health and the recognition, diagnosis, and treatment of sleep disorders through leadership, education, research, and communication.

For additional resources from the ACCP Sleep Institute, contact us at www.chestnet.org/institutes/si/.

(Adapted from the ACCP Position Statement: "Medical Director of Respiratory Care Department and Pulmonary Function Laboratory: Definition and Duties"; revised editions 2005, 2007)