

Your 2018 Sleep New Year's Resolution

By

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Over the past quarter century the American Academy of Sleep Medicine has coordinated with the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Transportation, academic institutions and commercial entities to educate the medical professions and public about the importance of sleep and the detrimental impact of sleep apnea. This has been successful and now obstructive sleep apnea is recognized as a medical condition that is life threatening.

Most physicians are aware of this condition, screening for it and supporting their patients in obtaining treatment. Interventions include surgery, nasal CPAP therapy, oral appliances and lifestyle changes either individually or in combination with one another.

The American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine (AADSM) has been part of this process from the beginning of this public education process. As a founding member of this organization I was privileged to represent it at the early meetings hosted by the National Center for Sleep Disorders Research (NCSDR); part of the National Institutes of Health. At that time few physicians and medical schools were aware of obstructive sleep apnea, nor was the public.

Now, it is not uncommon to find a late night TV commercial for products or gadgets to keep CPAP machines clean, or to purchase do-it-yourself mouthpieces for snoring, a symptom of obstructive sleep apnea. Entrepreneurs are seizing the opportunity to meet the demand for interventions.

With this comes the over-simplification of information about the conditions and remedies and cost cutting to meet the needs of insurance carriers including federal institutions. This is the commercial model where sometimes less than optimal results are factored into the process as acceptable in order to provide access at a lower cost.

This is the factory model. This makes sense with many of the products we purchase, however, how do you feel when you and your health, wellbeing and survival become one of these cost saving measures?

The solution to this is more individualized solutions available through those considered formally (or informally) as experts, who are problem solvers. If they are within an esteemed research institution, your insurance may cover the cost of this; if they are not, you may need to cover all or a portion of them.

Do you have an unresolved sleep apnea condition? Make it part of your 2018 New Year's Resolution to become able to breathe easier for a better sleep and better health in so many other ways too.