

American Academy of Sleep Medicine Accreditation

As the national accrediting body for sleep disorders centers and laboratories for sleep-related breathing disorders, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) is the leading voice promoting the highest quality of medical care for people with sleep problems. The first sleep center was accredited in 1977, and now more than 1,500 centers and labs are accredited by the AASM and are providing trusted medical assistance in communities all across the country.

A sleep center or lab may be affiliated with a hospital or academic institution, or it may be either a physician-owned or independent facility. A *sleep center* provides testing and treatments for all sleep disorders, including insomnia, restless legs syndrome and sleep apnea. A *sleep laboratory* provides testing for all sleep disorders and treatments for sleep-related breathing disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea and snoring.

AASM accreditation is the gold standard by which the medical community and the public can evaluate the services provided by a sleep center or lab. The standards for accreditation ensure that sleep medicine providers display and maintain proficiency in areas such as testing procedures and policies, patient safety and follow-up, and physician and staff training.

After applying for a five-year accreditation, a facility that appears to be in compliance with the AASM's standards receives a site visit from a board-certified sleep specialist. The site visitor evaluates the facility's personnel and services and then submits a report to the AASM's Accreditation Committee. Recommendations for accreditation are presented to the AASM board of directors for final approval. The entire process of earning accreditation can take centers and labs about four to six months to complete.

New sleep centers and labs that meet the AASM's core standards can apply for *provisional accreditation*. This designation allows a center or lab six months to build a history of quality patient care in order to meet all the standards required for full accreditation. This provisional status also is available for new facilities that are being opened by an existing center or lab.

The AASM also encourages Medicare and private health-insurance providers to link the reimbursement of sleep services to AASM accreditation. Recognizing that accreditation leads to improvements in patient care, many of these providers now cover sleep-related services only if they are performed in a center or lab that is accredited by the AASM. This requirement promotes a consistent level of excellence in the provision of sleep medicine services nationwide.

A searchable directory of accredited sleep centers and labs is available online at <http://www.sleepcenters.org>.

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