

## AAOHN's Sleep Initiative

**What is Sleep Health?** Sleep health, as a new 2020 Healthy People goal, is an important occupational health and safety issue for AAOHN members. Sleep is linked to overall physical and mental health wellbeing. Fatigue related to long hours, medication use, and poor sleep can contribute to motor vehicle crashes in professional drivers; 25% of truck drivers were classified as having chronic sleepiness as measured by the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (Heaton et al., 2008). Health care providers have a high prevalence of sleep disorders, with 52% of licensed night-shift nurses identified as sleep deprived (Johnson et al., 2010). Work-related musculoskeletal symptoms in nurses were significantly associated with overtime and adverse scheduling (Trinkoff et al., 2006). Health care provider fatigue is a well-recognized factor in medical errors, as illustrated by the 2008 Institute of Medicine Report "Resident Duty Hours: Enhancing Sleep, Supervision and Safety."

**Why Would Sleep Health Be An AAOHN Priority?** Sleep health was identified as a top AAOHN priority for 2013 through several mechanisms: through the 2012 AAOHN member survey, the AAOHN Grants Committee and the AAOHN Board of Directors. Two Healthy People 2020 Sleep Health goals are relevant for occupational health nurses: a) Reduce the rate of vehicular crashes per 100 million miles traveled that are due to drowsy driving; and b) Increase the proportion of adults who get sufficient sleep. Are OHNs knowledgeable about the health impacts of insufficient sleep? What science-based recommendations for sleep hygiene could OHNs share with interested workers? What questions should OHNs ask to assess quality and quantity of sleep for their target populations? AAOHN currently shares research findings and implications for practice to answer these practice questions through the AAOHN Journal: Workplace Health and Safety, and via webinars and the annual conference. However, what more can be done to advance sleep health education for OHNs so that sleep health is improved for our workers and their families?

### How You Become a Part of the Initiative

The AAOHN Grants Committee is seeking a group of interested AAOHN members who want to serve on a working group to seek AAOHN funding for an "AAOHN Sleep Health Education and Research Initiative." **Karen Heaton**, PhD, CEN, FNP-BC, Assistant Professor, University of Alabama, Birmingham School of Nursing will lead the team. She has extensive experience in research with Sleep, Cognition and Safety-Critical Event Characteristics Among Commercial Truck Drivers. She is also one of the developers of the AAOHN DOT Medical Examiners Training.

It is anticipated that through monthly conference calls this team would define the focus of the grant proposal, help write the proposal(s), in consultation with the Grants Committee, and provide leadership and sleep health expertise to move this initiative forward. Work could begin as early as May/June. Qualifications include, but are not limited to:

1. OHN practice experience with workers at high risk for sleep disorders;
2. experience in writing proposals;
3. knowledge of how to identify variables for analysis and/or data analysis with writing up of findings or,
4. quality improvement/program planning/process management skills.

All participants could contribute to potential scholarly output, including posters, publications, presentations, and progress reports.

*If you are interested, contact [Annette Byrd](mailto:Annette.Byrd@aaohn.org) by email or phone (800-241-8014) before May 8. Please submit a short description of your qualifications and/or submit your resume. Please take this opportunity to share your talent and make positive difference in an area that has such an impact on workers' health and wellbeing.*

### References

- Healthy People 2020. Sleep Health. Retrieved from <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=38>
- Heaton, K., Browning, S., & Anderson, D. (2008). Identifying variables that predict falling asleep at the wheel among long-haul truck drivers. *AAOHN Journal*, 56(9), 379-85.
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- Trinkoff, A.M., Rong, L., Geiger-Brown, J., Lipscomb, J., & Lang, G. (2006). Longitudinal relationship of work hours, mandatory overtime, and on-call to musculoskeletal problems in nurses. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 49(11), 964-971.

