

DON'T OVERLOOK THE VALUE OF STATE AND REGIONAL SLEEP SOCIETIES

By Tamara Kaye Sellman, RPSGT, CCSH



Sleep technologists commonly (though not always) become members of peer organizations, such as the American Association for Sleep Technologists (AAST) or the Board of Registered Polysomnographic Technologists (BRPT). They join because they know the inherent value in being part of the professional community. Beyond easy access to continuing education credits (CECs), they are interested in:

- Networking with other sleep health professionals
- Enjoying discounts on conference registrations and merchandise
- Taking pride in their profession
- Meeting employer requirements for attending annual conferences

National organizations certainly meet many critical needs for sleep technology professionals, but sometimes, it's support and involvement at the local level that cements a technologist's place in the community.

WHAT IS A STATE SLEEP SOCIETY?

Like those organizations at the national level, these are typically nonprofit organizations led by volunteers who work in the field. They come together chiefly to provide an annual meeting that sleep professionals in the region can attend to acquire their annual

CECs. Usually these meetings are open to all professionals within the scope of sleep health, such as physicians, dentists, patient educators, nurses, DME providers, and, of course, technologists. Sometimes meetings are scheduled for every other year and some, like the Washington State Sleep Society, skipped offering a conference in 2015, as the national SLEEP meeting was held in Seattle that same year.

However they function, state sleep societies can be the perfect umbrella for organizing sleep activists who wish to meet more regularly to discuss trending topics, review legislation that impacts their livelihood, or organize lobbies for sleep health measures at the state level. Occasionally, technologists will form a state sleep society as a state requirement for licensure, as well. How active these societies remain after they attain licensure can vary widely. Occasionally a state sleep society website will be several years out of date with no events planned for the near future. Others will post resources and information but never have live meetings to offer. As Yoona Ha reported last June for the AAST blog, "Some of these inactive sleep websites were originally set up as an information hub to obtain state licensure information for polysomnography. Once the goal of state licensing was accomplished, it appears that some sites are relatively quiescent. This appears to be the case, for instance, with the New York State Society of Sleep Medicine website."

However, while some societies seem to be in hibernation, others are alive and well and in need of volunteers to keep their numbers growing and their conferences active and relevant to the needs of their members. These organizations offer open-ended opportunities for sleep technologists and educators who are interested in networking, lobbying, participating in important research efforts or stimulating new public health outreach efforts at all levels. Which state and regional sleep society's are closest to you? Are you a member?



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INDIVIDUAL STATES WITH ACTIVE SLEEP SOCIETIES

Arizona:

[Arizona Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Oct 8, 2016

Arkansas:

[Sleep Professionals of Arkansas](#)

most recent meeting Apr 2016

California:

[California Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Sept 30, 2016

Colorado:

Colorado Sleep Society

most recent meeting June 2016

Delaware:

[Delaware Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Oct 21, 2016

Florida:

[Florida Association of Sleep Technologists](#)

next meeting Nov 11, 2016

Georgia:

[Georgia Association of Sleep Professionals](#)

next meeting Sept 24, 2016

Illinois:

[Illinois Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Oct 1, 2016

Iowa:

[Iowa Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Sept 16, 2016

Kansas:

[Kansas Association of Sleep Professionals](#)

next meeting Nov 3, 2016

Kentucky:

[Kentucky Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Oct 14, 2016

Louisiana:

[Louisiana Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

next meeting Oct 7, 2016

Maine:

[Maine Sleep Society](#)

most recent meeting Mar 2016

Maryland:

[Maryland Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Apr 27, 2017

Massachusetts:

[Massachusetts Sleep Society](#)

see Maine Sleep Society

Michigan:

[Michigan Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

next meeting Oct 7, 2016

Minnesota:

[Minnesota Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Oct 15, 2016

Mississippi:

[Mississippi Sleep Society](#)

most recent meeting Aug 2016

Missouri:

[Missouri Sleep Society](#)

most recent meeting Apr 2016

Montana:

[Montana Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Sept 29, 2016

New Jersey:

[New Jersey Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Nov 5, 2016

North Carolina:

[North Carolina Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

next meeting Oct 29, 2016

South Carolina:

[Carolina Sleep Society](#)

most recent meeting May 2016

Tennessee:

[Tennessee Sleep Society](#)

most recent meeting Apr 21 2016

Texas:

[Texas Society of Sleep Professionals](#)

next meeting Oct 7 2016

Virginia:

[Virginia Academy of Sleep Medicine](#)

next meeting Nov 3, 2016

Washington:

[Washington State Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Oct 21, 2016

West Virginia:

[West Virginia Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Sept 23, 2016

Wisconsin:

[Wisconsin Sleep Society](#)

next meeting Sept 23, 2016

REGIONAL SLEEP SOCIETIES

These organizations serve multiple states in a single region (and can often alternate host locations within these regions). They serve at least *half* of the states in the union and, in some cases, international members:

- **The Southern Sleep Society** (<http://www.southern-sleepsociety.org/>) serves the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia. It is the oldest regional sleep society in the country and its host location changes from year to year. Physician educational credits are provided during this 4-day event, which includes an 8-hour comprehensive technologist course (in collaboration with the AAST) providing comprehensive training, education, and CECs for sleep technologists. Their most recent meeting was held in Apr 2016.
- **The North East Sleep Society** (<http://www.northeastsleep.org/index.php>) serves the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. They offer a meeting every other year and have been active since 1985. Their most recent meeting was held in March 2015 and they do not have a meeting slated for 2016.
- **The Washington State Sleep Society** (<http://www.wasleep.org>) serves Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and southwestern Canada. The previously active Pacific Northwest Sleep Association, which typically served scores of Oregon-based sleep technologists, went defunct in 2016, making the WSSS and Montana Sleep Society meetings the only Northwest regional events available. Their next meeting is slated for Oct 21, 2016.

- **The Network of Asia Pacific Sleep Specialists** (<https://napss.org/>) uniquely serves sleep specialists who live across the Pacific Rim. This includes Hawaii, Malaysia, The Philippines, Thailand, China, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong and others. Their next meeting is slated for Oct 15, 2016 in Manila, The Philippines.
- **The Tri-State Sleep Society** (<http://nwosemisleep.org/>) serves Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio and launched their first annual educational meeting in Perrysburg, Ohio last May.

way they do two things at once: get their annual CECs and keep up with the networks of other sleep professionals they've built as the result of attending.

Join a board as an executive: Most state sleep societies are nonprofits ruled by requirements that include a functioning board. Check your local society to see if they are looking for new executive board members (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer). If you have administrative experience, they will surely appreciate and welcome it.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you're ready to move beyond your job in the sleep center to meet other sleep technologists, become a sleep activist, or widen your educational horizons, here are some ways you can get the ball rolling.

Go to a conference: Find the one nearest you, register and attend. For some sleep technologists, this annual event is the

Volunteer: There is no such thing as too many volunteers in a nonprofit environment. Lend a hand with registration, help a society with their website or sit on a committee. There's a task for every interest and the most active sleep societies rely on a large volunteer basis to get things done. This is a great way to enlarge your inner circle of sleep professional contacts and learn more about the functions of the board without having to be an executive. ❖

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