

Online Sleep Medicine Standards of Care

4 Critical Standards To Demand From Your Online Provider

1

Extensive Sleep Medicine Experience, Training, & Expertise:

As the discipline of sleep medicine continues to grow and expand, so do diagnosis and treatment options. For example, people with symptoms such as excessive snoring and/or excessive daytime sleepiness may be treated by family physicians, ENT specialists, dentists or others. Therefore, depending on their experience and training, your care provider's diagnosis and treatment recommendations can vary widely.

- Your online sleep medicine provider should educate you on the full range of diagnosis and treatment options, including home sleep testing, lifestyle changes, oral appliance therapy, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), and surgery. Consider the advantages of choosing a sleep medicine web consultation provider who is qualified in many or all of these treatment disciplines.
- Your online sleep medicine provider should be familiar with the Clinical Guidelines as set forth by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine.
- Ask if your online sleep medicine provider is certified by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and/or the American Academy of Dental Sleep Medicine.**

2

Quality Assurance:

Are quality assurance procedures in place specifically for online consultations? Web consultations should be of the same quality as in-office visits. This means information, history, and measures of patient outcomes need to follow standard clinical guidelines.

- Ask how your information is collected and tracked compared to the provider's in-office visit process. If the provider does not see in-office patients, make sure records are maintained that you and your other care providers have access to.
- Ask how the online care provider handles referrals and follow-up care. In order for your diagnosis and treatment to progress as quickly and routinely as possible, your online consultation will need coordinated follow-up and collaborative care. Therefore, it's important to know if your web consultation provider has a clear process for complete care referrals and follow-up.
- Active physical clinical practice. Like any medical specialty, your online web consultations are best performed by hands-on practitioners. Ask your provider about their off-line clinical practice. **Beyond their telemedicine website, research their brick and mortar practice and hospital affiliations.**

3

Evidence-Based Practice:

The specialty of sleep medicine has developed an evidence-based protocol. Just like an office visit with a sleep medicine specialist who follows evidence-based protocols as established by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM).

- Is the online "visit" conducted like the physical visit per AASM guidelines.** See the guidelines.
- Does the provider follow AASM diagnostic testing guidelines?
- Does the provider interpret sleep studies in accordance with AASM guidelines?
- Does the provider educate you on all aspects of care, including diagnosis and treatment?
- Does the provider perform follow-up evaluation as if the visit were in person?

4

Insurance and Claims Processing:

Your online web consultation and related diagnosis and treatment plan may be covered by insurance. However, many payers do not process claims for online consultations. In many cases, the out-of-pocket cost or an online web consultation will be comparable to your co-pay. Either way, ask how your online Web consultation can be properly processed by your insurer.



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