

## Memorial researchers note connection between sleep apnea and nighttime urination in postmenopausal women

PAWTUCKET – Thousands of postmenopausal women have obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and researchers with the Center for Primary Care and Prevention (CPCP) at Memorial Hospital have now connected the risk factors for OSA with nocturnal enuresis, or waking to urinate at night. Treatment for one condition, they claim, will help both.

The CPCP research team – which included **PATRICK KOO, MD, F. DENNIS MCCOOL, MD, LAUREN HALE, PhD, KATIE STONE, PhD, and CHARLES B. EATON, MD, MS** – recently published “Association of obstructive sleep apnea risk factors with nocturnal enuresis in postmenopausal women” in *Menopause: The Journal of the North American Menopause Society*.

The team mined the data made available by the landmark national study Women’s Health Initiative (WHI), which maintained a clinical presence at Memorial from 1993 to 2005, and

created a cohort of 2,789 women aged 50 to 79 years of age for this study.

“What we found suggests that a history of nighttime urination, including leakage, in postmenopausal women places them at increased risk of OSA,” explains Dr. Koo, who is also an assistant professor of medicine (clinical) at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. “Therefore, primary care providers should consider assessing for OSA risk factors in at-risk postmenopausal women with nocturnal enuresis.

“Most importantly, postmenopausal women with nocturnal enuresis should report it to their physician.”

The connection between OSA and nocturnal enuresis is as basic as understanding that apnea-associated changes in a person’s intrathoracic pressure causes increased urine output. Although it is typically more common in men, OSA increases in women after

menopause. If it is left untreated, OSA can lead to the development of high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. Treatment of OSA with a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine not only improves blood pressure control and cardiovascular health, but, as the CPCP research team discovered, nocturnal enuresis as well.

“The incidence of nocturnal enuresis increases with age but not necessarily after menopause. The fact that women think this an expected sign of aging means that they do not mention it to their primary care providers,” Dr. Koo says. “In our research, however, we found that OSA risk factors – such as obesity, snoring, poor sleep quality, sleep fragmentation, daytime sleepiness, and hypertension – are clearly associated with nocturnal enuresis in post-menopausal women.” ❖

## Medical licensure and discipline legislative commission meets

STATE HOUSE – A newly created special legislative commission that will study and review current rules and regulations pertaining to the Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline held its first meeting next on Oct. 14.

The commission was formed due to legislation, 2015-H 5500A, sponsored by Rep. Michael W. Chippendale. The legislation created a nine-member special legislative study commission whose purpose is to study and analyze the rules and regulations pertaining to the Rhode Island Board of Medical Licensure and Discipline and to assess the fairness of the application of the rules and regulations regarding the discipline and counseling of any medical professional in the practice of medicine.

“Quality patient care is an issue that is of great importance to everyone – especially good doctors,” Representative Chippendale states. “Just as important is how our state treats the doctors responsible for the delivery of that care and it was brought to my attention late last year that there seems to have been a breakdown in the process of how fairly doctors are treated whenever a disciplinary or license-related issue arises,” continues Rep. Chippendale.

“It would be devastating to Rhode Islanders in need of high quality medical care if our state inadvertently developed a

reputation for being unjustly zealous in the application of our disciplinary standards which could drive good doctors out of, or keep good doctors from coming to our state to practice,” concluded Rep. Chippendale.

The nine-member commission will consist of:

- Rep. Michael W. Chippendale (R-Dist. 40, Foster, Coventry, Gloucester)
- Rep. Gregg Amore (D-Dist. 65, East Providence)
- Rep. Thomas Winfield ((D-Dist. 55, Smithfield, Gloucester)
- Rep. Samuel A. Azzinaro (D-Dist. 37, Westerly)
- Rep. Patricia L. Morgan (R-Dist. 26, West Warwick, Coventry, Warwick)
- Patricia Recupero, MD, former President of Butler Hospital
- Debbie McInteer, MD, Psychiatrist
- Elizabeth Galligan, public member
- Dean Lees, public member

The commission will also be meeting on Wednesday, November 4 at 3 pm and Wednesday, December 16 at 3 pm. ❖