

## Oral Appliance Awareness and Beyond

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This issue of the *Journal of Dental Sleep Medicine* (JDSM) contains a summary of the AADSM public awareness campaign now beginning its third year. A pre-campaign survey revealed that although the public was aware of OSA as a common disease it was unaware that an oral appliance provided by a dentist is possible treatment. The article “Generating Awareness for Oral Appliance Therapy” reviews for AADSM members some of activities conducted to date and the plan for future activities.<sup>1</sup> An important component of the campaign is the members “Toolkit.” The “Toolkit” contains documents and action steps to create public awareness of oral appliance therapy in your community and suggestions for customizing these items for your particular circumstances.

The summary includes a tip on one way to begin using the “Toolkit.” All members should find this a relatively easy way to begin. Members will find the full “Toolkit” in the member’s section of [aadsm.org](http://aadsm.org).

This campaign to raise awareness of oral appliance therapy should be considered just part of the public education that we can provide. Dentists with education in sleep should consider themselves “first responders” in the area of public education in sleep.

Some current societal views of sleep have led to sleep habits that are detrimental to both individual and societal health, and safety.

Education of patients, colleagues and other in our sphere of influence should be considered an important role for those of us broadly knowledgeable in the field of sleep. Patients, colleagues, family and community groups can all benefit from education not only on the role oral appliance therapy but beyond into basic sleep hygiene.

When and how much to sleep, avoiding shift work and circadian disruption when possible and providing better support to those essential services that must include shift work: we can pass on core information on these topics.

The recent American Pediatric Association policy statement on “School Start Times for Adolescents” raises an issue to be addressed in all communities.<sup>2</sup> School start times before 8:30 am contribute to insufficient sleep in adolescents. Insufficient sleep significantly affects the health, safety and academic performance in adolescent. Class times based on teacher/parent/local government preferences rather than the healthiest time for adolescents may have long-range negative impacts on society.

Dental sleep medicine practitioners are ideally placed to help society “relearn” best sleep practices.

Look for future issues of JDSM to have more information on sleep and health.

### CITATION

Dort LC. Oral appliance awareness and beyond. *Journal of Dental Sleep Medicine* 2014;1(3):109.

### REFERENCES

1. L.C. Williams & Associates. Generating awareness for oral appliance therapy. *Journal of Dental Sleep Medicine* 2014;1:139–40.
2. American Pediatric Association. School start times for adolescents. *Pediatrics* 2014;134:642–9.

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### DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Dr. Dort is Editor-in-Chief of *Journal of Dental Sleep Medicine*.