

Dr. Alpher Continues Efforts to Help Transportation Industry with Sleep and Highway Safety

Poor sleep can contribute to accidents due to fatigue. Dr. Alpher continues collaborating with truckers, union leaders, and policymakers on Sleep Apnea.

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Dr. Elliott Alpher, DDS, D'[ASBA](#) and the American [Sleep](#) and Breathing Academy (ASBA) are excited to update you on our tremendous progress with the transportation industry. We have come a long way since we started on this journey four years ago, tirelessly continuing to bring awareness by educating policymakers and leaders on the effectiveness of Oral Appliance Therapy ([OAT](#)) for the treatment of obstructive sleep apnea. Former Congressman Marty Russo, who was successfully treated for OSA and experienced the revolutionary benefits of OAT heard about our obstacles and believed that more people should be aware of the benefits of OAT and joined our efforts.



During the summer 2013, in response to regulations for commercial truck drivers with sleep apnea to be treated with either CPAP or surgery that were under consideration by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Medical Advisory Board (MAB), Dr. Elliott Alpher along with experts that included David Gergen, Dr. Richard Klein, Dr. Rick Bonato and NFL great Derek Kennard presented an OAT solution to the Secretary of the Department of Transportation and cabinet. At the conclusion of that meeting, the group agreed that oral appliances along with new micro-recorder compliance—a device that indicates that the truckers are wearing their sleep device coupled with home sleep testing—would be a superior and much easier alternative to CPAP or major surgery.

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Dr. Elliott Alpher

The American Sleep and Breathing Academy has been actively involved in championing sleep and airway awareness. In May 2016, ASBA members advocated on behalf of OAT by inundating the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA's) and Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA's)

Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) in proposed rule-making to screen, diagnose, treat, and track compliance of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) in individuals occupying sensitive positions in highway and rail transportation with scientific research to support OAT. That same month, Dr. Alpher met with and received Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's support to co-host and to enlighten Members of Congress on the dangers of undiagnosed sleep and airway problems. "Our goal is to work together with the transportation industry leaders, regulators, and transportation personnel to diagnose and treat OSA while maintaining highway safety with as little operational disruption as possible," says Dr. Alpher.

Dr. Alpher and the ASBA's most recent achievement to date is collaboration with the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) with 158,000 members in all 50 states and Canada who collectively own and/or operate more than 240,000 individual heavy-duty trucks and small truck fleets. The OOIDA mission is to serve owner-operators, small fleets and professional truckers, and work to maintain a fair and efficient business climate for all truck operators, promote highway safety and responsibility among all highway users. OOIDA Director of Operations, Tom Weakley will be a guest speaker at this year's annual Sleep and Wellness conference hosted by the ASBA on April 21-22 in Phoenix, AZ. He will be presenting the OOIDA's position and concerns on the present recommendations for the limited treatment options and how the Medical Review Board has used and, to some extent, tried to limit any other treatment modality other than CPAP.

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