

Featured Partner

MD Sleep develops and manages physician-owned sleep disorder centers including a comprehensive suite of services focused on the patient's continuum of care – from diagnosis to treatment.



An interview with Warren Ball
Executive Vice President



Q: Why have you chosen MedAxiom as a partner?

A: MedAxiom interacts with practices in need of fresh ideas in this rapidly changing healthcare environment. We have a terrific business model. We appreciate the exposure we get to many of the best cardiology practices in the country. We hope through our corporate sponsorship we can create a better understanding of what sleep apnea does to the heart, and that its treatment should absolutely become part of the cardiology mindset. The most important thing we are hoping to communicate is that we can make it easy for the practice to have this service, that there are significant profits that can be added to the practice's bottom line, but most importantly, that our model really looks after the best interests of the patient.

Q: How does your business currently interact with the cardiology practices?

A: We interact in three ways. First, we offer turnkey development that ultimately leads to a beautiful, state-of-the-art sleep facility, with sleep rooms that are not unlike what you might find at a first class hotel. Within 150 days, we can have a business in place that is fully integrated with the practice, that is fully staffed with acquisition technicians (practice's employees) trained by our own sleep school (4 week program), with policies, procedures, and protocols in place, all culminating in a sleep facility that will meet the accreditation standards set forth by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM). Second, we employ an on-site clinic coordinator to manage the sleep lab and its staff, and to act as the liaison between MD Sleep and the physician practice. This is a night-time business that creates its own unique set of issues. We seek to eliminate the headaches. Third, our sister company, CardioSom, a durable equipment provider (DME), works to follow the patient, from diagnosis through on-going treatment. These respiratory therapists will offer a quality of care that quite frankly doesn't exist in many areas of the country. The compliance rates we achieve far surpass what is the standard of the industry.

Q: What is required to start up a sleep lab?

A: You first will need to find the space. You will need anywhere from 2,000 to 3,500 sq/ft depending on the number of beds. You may have to pay some money towards the tenant improvement of the space. You will have the soft costs of putting it all together (development), as well as the hard costs associated with the equipment and furnishings that go into the lab. Lastly, you will need to set aside a few months of working capital as you ramp up the business.

Q: How does a cardiology practice know how many patients will need a sleep study?

A: Our company can help by doing an analysis using percentages of the different segments of the cardiology patient population that are indicated to have sleep apnea. Most research indicates that 40-45% of a cardiology practice has some form of sleep apnea.

Q: What differentiates your organization from others?

A: There are many regional sleep companies offering a variety of models. Our model is the only one where the physicians own 100% of the business. Most of our partners are billing under their current provider number, billing sleep as they would any other diagnostic service. We are paid a fixed management fee that covers the costs of our on-site manager, as well as a centralized scheduler who completes all of the insurance verification, while working diligently to keep your beds full. We make our profit off of the sale of durable medical equipment to any patients who come our way. We implement a follow-up program that involves conducting CPAP clinic in the physician office, with our staff coordinating everything. Through this contracted arrangement, the practice bills for the services provided creating more profits to the practice. Physicians, in some cases, may elect to sell DME directly to their patients. If so, we have a program in place that facilitates this process.

Q: What is the value of what MD Sleep brings to the physician practice?

A: We are a partner. Our value comes ultimately from what we do for the patient. If we can make it easy for physicians and their patients to avoid the long delays of getting studied, if we can make it easy for the practice to absorb sleep into their everyday way of thinking, including training the physicians to do their own interpretations (with back-up from experts), and if through our continuum of care we follow the patient, our value will come from making a difference in the quality of care delivered over and above what is currently offered. Our ability to track outcomes will prove valuable to the practice in its dealings with the insurance companies.

Q: What are your long-term goals in servicing the cardiology practice arena?

A: By the end of the year, we will have over 120 sleep beds under our management. With such a large pool of patients and practices, we hope to begin implementing research protocols into the sleep labs owned by our physician partners. Many cardiology patients present with new issues during the night. Many die of sudden cardiac death. Why is that? What role does sleep play in this? These are questions that need answers.

Q: Who should the MedAxiom practices contact with questions about MD Sleep?

A: Please contact either me at wball@md-sleep.com, or my assistant Mike Triplett at mtriplett@md-sleep.com, phone number (317) 706-1080, extension 145.