

**Position Statements on Practice**

**Administering sedating medications by  
respiratory therapists for sleep studies**

Original position issued: March 26, 1999

Reconsidered: October 16, 2006

Position:

It is the Board's position that Respiratory Care Professionals may administer medications for the testing and treatment of cardiopulmonary impairment. To assure a proper sleep study for determining sleep apnea it may be necessary to administer a light sedative, such as a sleeping pill. OAC rule 4761-7-05 contains specific guidelines on the administration of medications to induce mild to moderate sedation.

Background:

Persons working in polysomnography labs are often ordered to administer Ambien or similar product to persons being tested. The purpose of the administration is to aid in inducing sleep to improve the validity of the diagnostic test. Polysomnography studies can be ordered to test for a number of disorders. The most common; however, is sleep apnea, an obstructive disorder that occurs during sleep that leads to blood oxygen desaturation.

Section 4761.01 of the Revised Code permits respiratory therapists to administer medication for "the testing and treatment of cardiopulmonary impairment." The Board has written specific rules on the administration of medications that induce mild to moderate sedation by respiratory therapist (see OAC 4761-7-05). The polysomnography testing procedure is employed by medical professionals to rule out sleep apnea and other pathologies. When the medication is administered to test for a cardiopulmonary impairment (i.e., sleep apnea), the administration of the sedative may be within the scope of practice for respiratory care.