Introduction

Telemedicine is rapidly becoming an important component of multidisciplinary care of patients and the VA has been an early adapter of this technology. Fellows will gain experience utilizing the systems set up at the VA to provide both home sleep apnea testing and CBT-I (cognitive behavioral therapy for insomnia).

General Objectives

- Learn the techniques unique to interviewing, examining and managing patient care through telemedicine technologies;
- Develop an understanding of the hardware and software programs used to provide telemedicine evaluations.

Specific Educational Goals

Patient Care:
- Demonstrate compassionate care of the patient
- Demonstrate awareness of the psycho-social contexts of patients presenting with sleep disorders

Medical Knowledge:
- Learn how to conduct a detailed telemedicine interview and physical examination using the otoscope and stethoscope at the level of community-based outpatient clinic
- Learn how instruct patients on setting up a home sleep apnea device via a telemedicine link

Interpersonal and Communication Skills:
- Work effectively with clinic personnel and daytime technicians in the care of patients
Professionalism:
- Rate as valuable the duties and contribution of telemedicine providers
- Report to clinic on time and prepared to see patients

Practice Based Learning and Improvement:
- Gain experience in the presentation and diagnosis of patients through telemedicine

Systems Base Practice:
- Become knowledgeable in the various management and behavioral treatment strategies for sleep disorders

Role of the Fellow:

In each clinic rotation fellows will:
- Participate in evaluating patients, taking a history, developing a preliminary differential diagnosis, formulating the management plan via a telemedicine interface and coordinate care with the nursing staff and daytime technicians;
- Learn about home sleep apnea testing;
- Order the appropriate tests (diagnostic polysomnogram, home sleep testing, titration studies, CPAP smart card download, remote module for monitoring, oximetry, etc);
- Complete a performance evaluation form for the attending.

Role of the Attending:

The attending physician will attend the clinic and will:
- Review the clinical evaluations with the fellow;
- Be available to review relevant literature with the fellow;
- Complete a performance evaluation of the fellow.