

**The Lung Association
Position Statement
on
Funding for CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure)
for treatment of
Obstructive Sleep Apnea**

The Lung Association supports funding of CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) treatment under all provincial and federal health insurance plans for adults and children appropriately diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea. ¹

Background.

It is estimated that over one million Canadians have obstructive sleep apnea,^{2,3,4} a medical respiratory disorder shown to increase the risk of high blood pressure,^{5,6,8} heart attack,^{4,7} stroke⁴ and motor vehicle crashes.⁸ Sleep apnea causes significant health effects,⁸ increased healthcare utilization,⁹ limitations to daily activities and impaired quality of life.⁴ It has also been linked to premature death.^{4,10}

The Canadian Thoracic Society guidelines: Diagnosis and treatment of sleep disordered breathing in adults state that CPAP is the primary treatment for obstructive sleep apnea.¹ CPAP has proven to be a cost effective treatment.^{11,12} Patients with sleep disordered breathing use health care services at approximately twice the rate of control subjects prior to diagnosis, and for up to 10 years prior to the diagnosis of sleep disordered breathing.⁹ Further, CPAP treatment has an incremental cost-effectiveness ratio of \$2,618 per quality adjusted life year (QALY) over no treatment. A ratio of less than \$10,000/QALY is generally considered extremely cost effective.⁹

While CPAP treatment for obstructive sleep apnea is funded in other countries¹³ including the UK¹⁴ and the US,¹⁵ it is not funded in all parts of Canada. The health insurance plans of only three provinces (Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan) and of only two federal groups (First Nations and RCMP) cover CPAP equipment and some of these provide only partial coverage.

**Approved by Public Policy Committee of the CLA Board
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