Top Sleep Medicine and Sleep Tech Leaders of 2025 Transcript

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Folks, thank you all so much. It's year number four, and that is all due to you. Thank you so for all the love, the likes, subscriptions, especially the shares, getting the word out there to all sleep technologists, sleep professionals and sleep curious.

Everyone that's interested in what's going on in the world of sleep wellness, health, medicine and technology, we're here for you! And a huge, huge shout out to all our sponsors, without whom we can't do what we do each and every episode for you.

So please be sure to check them out. Links are all in the description. But this episode is a very special episode because we are talking about the STT Awards, Sleep Tech Talk Awards.

And folks, it's a power packed episode with power pack people and awards. Let's just get right into it. Our first one is the Sleep Technologists of the Year.

Sleep Technologist of the Year: Kevin Adley

Gentlemen, drums please, who is award winner? Kevin Adley! Alright, round of applause to Kevin. Let's hear a little bit about him, Robert. Yes. Hey, Jerry.

Man, I have to tell you. I think that Kevin might be our, you know, he's our number one fan, but he is, we consider him sort of a, He might need the fourth host of this show because he typically will take, every time an episode comes out, Kevin will jump online.

He'll do an assessment of the show so that people can see what the episode's about. You know, he's just has done such a great job in being able to help share and get the word out about the podcast.

So we're super excited that we've worked in different capacities with Kevin over the years, I would say, among the three of us. But most recently, Emerson and I had the opportunity to work with kevin on the AAST board.

And, you know he is a fantastic asset there as well. Emerson, what do you think? You know what, I can't disagree. It's been fun to just watch Kevin's career.

I've done work with him in the past when he was a customer at Midwest Sleep and then to see his work, you know, with Dr. Lullaby and now with Zola Itamar, it's so rewarding to se Kevin career just continue to grow and just thrive.

But to your point, he is fantastic at just amplifying the show He's even an industry leader. If you go and you follow Kevin, you're going to see him posting just like, we try to do to really elevate the field.

And then working hand in hand with him, like you said, with AST has been incredible. He is a leader, he's actually on our executive committee as our member at large, as a director at just really brings his A game to sleep and he's passionate about it.

Years ago, I got to actually go on a sales call with Kevin and see him in action in front of customers. And he is just,

he has the consummate professional.

He comes prepared and just what we see them do in the show with how he promotes it and promotes sleep, He's that way every day in a front customer. So he was a great ambassador for sleep.

you know, for this first award to go like it is, no one could be more deserving than Kevin to be our Sleep Technologist of the Year. So congratulations, Kevin.

Job well done. We're so proud of you and we're thankful for you. I'd like to also add that his impact, like you said, at the AST, but also at a more local level, the state level.

He's on the board with the Illinois Sleep Society. And it's really amazing to see how much work he does for the industry, for field. Obviously, he's, I love to say, super fan.

and continues to promote us and gets the word out there and shares who we are to all the people. But he also really works hard at the local level and also with the community at large at AST.

So it's really amazing to see people like that. Absolutely. Love, Kevin. And Kevin, there is an award that will be on its way to your home soon. All right.

This is another category we had last year. This the Person of the Year, STT's Person Of The Year 2025. And who might that be? Drums, please. All right.

We have Dr. Wendy Troxell. And she came on our show back in last year in 2025, was fantastic. She introduced an interesting concept with sleep divorce.

That was the title of the show. But as you went on to listen to the shows, you really began to see that that's not really what she wants to say. It's really more sleep alliance.

And how do couples come together? How do they heal their relationship? And it really begins with having healthy sleep. But calling out that, we know people, maybe we've been one of those people before where we end up having to sleep apart because one us has a sleep disorder.

And there's 84 sleep disorders to choose from, but often it's going to be that snore. Her really bringing light to that of addressing sleep-disordered breathing for the sake of the relationship, the family, was really fantastic.

But she goes on. A couple of other things she talked about was the difference between the patient that goes to bed late and the person that gets up early.

She called one the wolf. And then the other, she called the lion and the wolf is, you know, feels guilty and judged for sleeping in. And the Lion is feels lonely in the evening.

So you've got people that have all kinds of disparities and challenges they have at home that she draws a lot of attention to. It's really a lots of fun to hear her talk about that and just elevated her show.

Person of the Year: Dr. Wendy Troxell

We're so thankful for for what she brought to our show back in July of twenty twenty five. Robert, what were some of your thoughts about her? You know, I love and I hope that someday I can coin some phrase around, you know in the world of sleep medicine.

So, she certainly has taken this idea around sleep divorce and elevated the discussion, but if you really look at sort of her approach to lots of things, fine-tuning behavioral sleep medicine and that whole approach.

A little more holistic behavioral and also psychological in nature and how she's being able to manage patients

through those sleep divorces. You've got also teenage sleeping issues and then how patients deal with CPAP from a behavioral science standpoint.

I think that she certainly has that particular part of our industry covered and is, you know, a champion in that regard. So, kudos to her for winning the Person of the Year.

We appreciate her joining us on the show. And, I have to say, we've been very fortunate in being able to get just unbelievable guests that people want to hear.

It's not about us, it's really about each one of them, the guests who joined the Show. Wendy was fantastic. And let's not forget her contributions all across in terms of where all she's been.

Obviously, she has been on her show, but she is also been in the TEDx stage more than once and is a noted speaker on all these topics. And I like how you said that, Emerson.

It's our show was not just about sleep divorce, even though that was the catchy title, it was about alliance. Like Robert highlighted, whether it's the couples, in bed or is it there is a disparity in the shift or whether it's with teenagers.

She touched on each of these topics to help us better understand what is going on with patients in general, creating an overall advocacy, so to speak, on the holistic side of sleep medicine and sleep wellness.

I think for all of us, that was a huge takeaway from that episode. All right, and let's move on to the next winner. Hey, do we have an official name for these?

Is it the Techie Award? I was sitting here thinking Academy Award, Emmys, Oscars. We got to have a name to this thing. Is that the Sleepy? What's our…

I like Sleepys or Sleepies or Techies. You wanted to coin something, Robert? You said just a few seconds ago. How about… I'll have to come up with something, something kitsch.

Yeah, I like techies. I liked sleepies, but we may have change the shape of the, we have the change of shape. You know, what I wonder if some of our listeners would let us know.

Maybe they could message us and let's know what would they, What do they think? You because we've got such a great following and what they would love to hear us call our award.

That would be pretty cool. Love it. That's a great idea. If you guys heard that, drop a message in the comments on what you'd like to hear the awards be called.

Perfect. All right. So let's go on to the next one. And this is Sleep Influencer of the Year. I think this was a very interesting category. We did not have this in the past.

Even though we did have multiple influencers on our show over the last few years, I wouldn't say I it really was somebody very dramatic, very energetic, and very very special that we had to create this award for them.

And gentlemen, drums please, who was this Award winner? Dr. Michael Bruce. Dr Michael Bruse. All right, so tell us a little bit about Dr Bruce Yeah, so Dr.

Bruce is the sleep doctor. I think most folks who are in the industry who've been around for a while have had some exposure to Dr Bruce. He does a lot of, I would say, engagements related to being able to do education on sleep health.

And we spent some time with him. Emerson, what were the topics we talked about with Dr, Bruce? Oh, my gosh, you know, he just he had just released a book, Sleep, Drink and Breathe.

And, the three dominoes of wellness is where we really camped out and. It was really fascinating thinking about kind of looking back through everything and thinking through that episode because he offered so many nuggets for our listeners and whether they were a patient or a clinician and things they could do.

But he even talked about shifting chronotypes, some of the issues with wearables, how to manage that. One of ones I really thought about a lot was his positional melatonin.

I mean, we know so people that use that like it's candy. and you find out that it's a prescribed medicine in Europe. And in here, he reminded us that, it is not about a tool to initiate sleep, but to regulate sleep.

So, so many fantastic golden nuggets from him. You and I have known him for a very long time, just to see him and his role as a great uh, voice for sleep, you know, in the public arena, I saw him on a Delta flight once where he was talking about sleep on the flight.

We see him, on on T on, the different TV shows, but, he's, a consummate professional. He cares a lot about this industry. But I think what's really cool is, is he really cares about the patient, both him and Dr.

Trox, actually all of our guests do. or all of our winners do.

Sleep Influencer of the Year: Dr. Michael Breus

But it really came through in our episode as he talked about some of those nuances and wanting people to get it right as they think about what they do with their sleep.

So really good, really great episode. Another reason he's the Sleep Influencer of the Year. Jerry, what were your thoughts? You know, it's funny that you said that, the amount of impact, and you saw him on a flight, meeting a show on the flight.

He's on TV or something, or some interview, some over 200, 300 days out of the year. I mean, It's the majority of year he is making an appearance. And you can't get more influencer than that.

We're TV stations, network. networks, they reach out to him for his opinion. And the coolest thing I thought about is the fact that he was a sleep technologist like all of us before he got his PhD and went on to be the sleep doctor.

To me, that's probably the cool thing about him is that, he knows every nook and cranny, every little corner of the field, and he's able to guide patients in the right direction for that.

And there's a lot to say about that when approaching a patient. Yeah. And I'm not saying that we're trying to take away from his book sales, but if you listen to that episode of the podcast, there may be six secrets to successful sleep that he was able to share with us.

So if your in our audience, you should absolutely check that one out. I think it was our 100th episode. It was a bit of a special You know, time for us celebrating that milestone and having him join us on the show.

And, you know it was great to be able to kind of go through memory lane a bit of how long we've actually known and worked with him. Emerson, I know you're thinking about 20 plus years, might be 25 plus, years that we we know and work with them, way all the way back to days when he was in the Atlanta market, and was really sort of part of a pretty significant sleep program back in those days.

So great to have Dr. Bruce on the show. He was absolutely just a pleasure and a joy to talk to and lot of energy. Thank goodness we've got people like him in the world that keep us all moving and shaking in a world of sleep.

And by the way, if you have any type of social media directed consumer marketing, you're going to see a Dr. Bruce ad at some point either in association with The Sleep Doctor.

I think he's doing some things with Orion Sleep. They do some thermoregulation during sleep. So he is a big player in that space. You know, it's funny you said that about the 100th episode.

We'll be sure to add the links also to each of these folks and their episodes so that people can always reference them. I think that would be a good little gesture that we can offer for our listeners.

All right. And next award, actually, I got to preface this. Last year we had a product of the year award, which I thought was really cool. This year, we kind of had to parse that out because it was not easy to select a Product of The Year, and now products have changed the way they're being delivered now.

A sound sleep calls for a high-performing mask. Introducing F&P Nova Nasal with SwingFit Headgear. From fitting and seal to minimal noise and draft, its performance defined.

Go to fphcare.com forward slash nova nasal to learn more. This first one that we're going to talk about, or rather the next one, is the Sleep Science Award.

And drums please. Gentlemen, who is that? We have Colin Lawler, the CEO of Sleepless, this was a really fascinating episode. It was one of our highest listened to episodes of 2025. And I think what was really fascinating is when you look at how we're seeing sleep evolve, there's so much technology.

There's many things that are evolving in front of us. People like Colin are looking at it and saying, how do we take the friction out of it? And the friction for the patient really, but it's because there are so many points in the process that make it really clunky.

And he's thinking much bigger. He's been doing it for a long time, a lot longer than we have. But one of the things that he described was this consumer to clinical bridge.

of how data and high end wearables can really be that solution for a patient. And I think that, you know, he's one of those that's really far out ahead when we're thinking about the future.

One of the statements he made that really stuck with me is that he feels like, within four years, that the sleep study will not be the gold standard, but it will be the continuous stream of data collected around the patient.

And that really makes sense now that we can see that night-to-night variability we've talked about for eons, you know, with all these wearables, being able to see the stream data over the course of nights and weeks and months and even years.

could completely change how we see a patient. And as we think of the different AI endotypes and phenotypes, and that becomes more crystallized, I think that's going to become a greater reality for us.

It's exciting to see and to be able to witness what this developing frontier looks like. I got excited when you said phenotype, but Robert, what are your thoughts?

You know, there's a few episodes where I'm completely geeked out and it probably comes through when we put the podcast out. It's like, man, every time you guys talk about tech, You know, Robert's always excited to ask more questions probably than my co-host, but I just can't help myself.

It's an area I absolutely love and I love this idea around the connected care points of contact and care for a patient in the sleep health space. I think it's absolutely some things that are going to be part of our future.

It's interesting, if you go all the way back, I remember the day when SleepAI was actually SleepScore Labs and they had acquired a little wireless monitor that you could sit on the bedside.

I can't remember, S plus I think is what that thing was called. And I remembered downloading the app for the first time, pulling it up, seeing my respirations and there was nothing connected to me.

It was just this little monitor, that was recording my respiratory rate next to And they certainly have come a long way from there. I think as they work on continued AI and predictive sleep health issues, we're going to see this sleep AI company become a bigger part of our world in the future.

So couldn't be more excited and geeked out about the world of sleep and AI. You know, both of you make excellent points here, and I know we keep joking about Emerson and his love for phenotypes, but it's a really good point.

We're getting real-world data each and every night through sleep.ai's Solution offering and it just keeps getting better and better each and every day.

Like Robert said the origin of it. It was a little thing and to be To be offered something where it could measure your respiration.

Sleep Science Award: Colin Lawler and Sleep.ai

There's nothing connected to you. What an amazing thought whereas now It goes beyond the sleep study. And like Emerson said, that takeaway to be able to understand the night by night variation, to have technology that's able do that and the information and what we can do with it afterwards, it's just absolutely mind-blowing.

I find it really exciting where this is going to take us even further. The amount of data and the studies that they've been able to, or rather than the study, I think more than that, the inference that you can get from the data that the have been publishing has been absolutely amazing so far.

And I'm just excited about what's going be happening in the future. All right, let's move on to the next and final category. And I would ask you gentlemen any guesses, but since it's the last one, you already know what it is.

So that's, I'm just going to throw it out there. This is the sleep change agent award. And again, because we could not do product of the year since there was so much going on over there and we had to parse it.

Out. this is a new award sleep, change agents, just when we thought nothing could be done with CPAPs. We got something else coming on board. so gentlemen, what, who is award winner this year?

Sleep Rez. And that's Cricket by Sleep Res. That's it. Yes. Thank you. Tell us a little bit about that, Robert. You know, we had Dr. William Noah on our program I don't know, maybe a couple of years ago now, where he was originally talking about redefining what CPAP looked like and that he had this idea that the pressure could be delivered differently.

Back at that time, I know we were talking the VCOM. Since then, we had Dr. David White come on and talk about KPAP. KPAPP stands for Kairos Pap. What we know, and the three of us have had the opportunity to breathe on K-PAP now, is that it is going to be a huge deal in the industry.

I think that patients will be the beneficiary of this new idea of how to deliver PAP therapy to patients in a very different way. From a clinical perspective, you almost have to set aside some of the things that you've learned from a respiratory standpoint in past and be open to this sort of new concept of of how PAP can be delivered.

But congratulations to that team. We're super excited for them. And we know that they're going to have the Cricut K-PAP device out in pretty short order.

I know they are gearing up for a market launch here soon. So congratulations, to their team! You know, it's exciting to watch this. This is another one where I've just been so fortunate, like you have, Robert, The whole story evolved over several years, because I visited Dr.

Noah's house, and he had this thing in his hand. He said, I want you to breathe on this. I'm not going to show it to you. And right there in this office, so I was breathing on the pressure relief.

In my words were, this is going change the market. And, you know, it ended up being, going in that direction, probably slower than he wanted, but faster than I expected.

And here we are, we're at the K-pop. You know it's also interesting when you look back at our show, It was actually back in August of 2022 when Dr. Noah came on the show.

So that's all far back. So, you know, three and a half-ish years ago, he's on the show telling us about VCOM. And now we've seen him evolve, like you said, with Dr.

White and then with, Dr White, and Dr Day came on to really talk about the device. I think what's fun to watch now is the excitement in the market. You know I know different people that are waiting on it.

and just really biding their time till it comes to market so they can begin prescribing it and seeing it on their patients. So it's exciting to see this happen.

I'm so happy for Dr. Noah and the whole team there. You know, they're really growing. There's a lot of great friends that are going there or already part of the company.

But, you know it really a testament to really, all of our guests, and this is something we've talked about before, They all do something interesting. They see a problem and they begin to look at how they can fix it.

And in this situation, Dr. Noah saw a problems with his patients and how were struggling with breathing on pressure and what could he do to make a difference in his own lab with own patients.

From that came the solution. So it's an incredible American story of ingenuity and not quitting. and that perseverance and, you know, incredibly proud of him as a friend, but, it's so rewarding to watch how this has unfolded and where they're headed as, as the company and him, a leader in our field.

So huge congratulations to Dr. Noah and the SleepRest team. Jerry, what were your thoughts? Yeah, I couldn't say it better than either of you. The only thing I would add is Dr.

Noah has given patients additional choice. And I think that's a big, big aspect of the change in technology that has taken place in sleep altogether is there's lot more choice for patients.

Hopefully, we're going to have an episode about that in the near future. It was it was a question of like you said american ingenuity there was eight a questioning in docs mind about and he's gonna get angry at me for saying dot so bills mine for for what can what more can we do can there can be something different than our traditional way he began to question and looking into it and saying.

wait a second, I think something better can be done for patients and let's give them a chance to do better on therapy. And now we have something that's FDA approved and I can't say anything better than that, that it has given patients additional choice.

You know, can you imagine how many conversations, how may miles, How many meals he has invested over the last few years to make this all come to fruition?

And, you know I know it certainly is taking other people to bring the vision to light. But, ultimately, he started all of this just by sort of questioning the norm and the standards and with the ultimate goal of You know, not necessarily trying to build a worldwide successful company, which I think they're going to ultimately end up with.

Sleep Change Agent Award: SleepRes and K-PAP

But, you know really just it was all about patient care to begin with and, and you just Dr. Noah, incredible, credible work and appreciate everything that he's done to contribute to, to make CPAP more comfortable for patients through KPAP.

Well, gentlemen, before we close, I'd love to hear your thoughts about not just all these winners, but what's happened last year in general. We've had a lot of really great guests on.

Really, it's been rewarding to see how Sleep Talk has evolved since we launched it so many years ago. But to have the thought leaders on, we've have one thought leader after another.

And it's just really fantastic to see that because we stay with that theme of this, there's entrepreneurs that are changing the world around them. And that's such a beautiful part of what our industry is, is how do we continue to raise the bar?

And we've seen that with one guest after the other. In some of these choices we made around these awards were really difficult because, I mean, every single one of our guests were world class.

And it was tough to really narrow this down to these few because any one of our guests could have easily been an award winner and truly are, as far as Sleep Tech Talk is concerned, because they've elevated the game, they have elevated conversation.

And by the hundreds of, literally hundreds, of thousands of people that have listened to SleepTech Talk this year, and literally over a million, of listeners have listened to us this year.

It's incredible to see us break through that threshold and have that reach. So for those listeners out there that have been a part of that, thank you so much.

But for our guests, think of the impact you've made. You know, the number of people that have heard your story that maybe made a decision of change for their life have been given hope.

And as, as Jerry said, have a choice on therapy for a part of their lives. Maybe they didn't have before. So fantastic year of 2025. There's so much more to talk about that we could dig into, and maybe we can have another episode for that, but it's been a fantastic.

You're a lot of phenomenal guests. Wow, that was awesome, Emerson, thank you. I think the one thing that I would say about 2025 is certainly it was a year of change.

It seems like there is a shift in the world of sleep diagnostics and how patients are gaining access to becoming diagnosed for different types of sleeping issues.

We even have AI facial scanning and things that are available out there now that we didn't have a But I would say from a treatment standpoint, that's where I feel like some of the greatest changes are starting to occur where it's maybe the idea of trying to get to an AHA of zero is not attainable if a patient can't utilize that particular type of therapy.

So maybe we're working toward a world that is we want to treat patients, we wanna do the best we can for them. It may not be an AHI zero, but it's a much greater reduction in AHi for that patient.

And it is something that they can tolerate and utilize or wear on any given night. So their acne is essentially treated the best that it can be. But we do have to move away from a world where we allow 50% adherence mark to be the gold standard.

And I feel like we're moving in that direction as an industry. So looking for all these different alternatives that are out there, surgical treatment options, oral appliance therapy, and pharmaceuticals, all the things are starting to become solutions for a patient that will ultimately produce a better outcome for us as a population at whole.

be sure to check out our clinical sponsor, Sleep Review Magazine. More details in show notes. Well, Robert Emerson, thank you so much for those words there and a huge shout out once again, congratulations to the winners.

It was like Emers said, it was a tough call and shout-out to all the guests in the past. We can't thank y'all enough for joining us. A huge shout out to all of you out there.

Viewers, the listeners, thank you. You make us want to continue what we're doing. And trust me, we have full-time jobs. We have other things that we do and we find a way to make this happen.

And the guests, they have their own schedules and we appreciate them trying to find a way to make it happen with us as well. So thank you so much for making it worthwhile.

A huge shout out to the sponsors. Please be sure to check them out. And without them, we couldn't continue doing this. We really, really appreciate that.

With that being said, thank