Dawn K. Wilson, PhD

Biographical Sketch

Dawn Wilson is a Professor of Psychology and Director of the Obesity Research Group at the University of South Carolina (USC). She received her Ph.D. in Psychology at Vanderbilt University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. After serving as a faculty member in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center and in the Department of Internal Medicine at the Medical College of Virginia she joined USC in 2001.

Her nationally funded program of research focuses on developing theoretically-based interventions for health promotion in minority adolescents and their families. Her theoretical approach integrates bioecological models, family systems, and motivational approaches for understanding social and environmental influences of long-term health behavior change. She has served as a primary investigator on more than 35 grants supported by NIH, CDC, RWJF, and the National Kidney Foundation. Her current trials are evaluating the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of social marketing interventions on increasing safety and access for walking in high crime, underserved communities. Her recent projects integrate cultural and family-based approaches to tailoring effective weight loss programs in minority adolescents.

Wilson has received national recognition for her research. She was the recipient of an NIH FIRST Award to study dietary factors of blood pressure regulation in minority youth which was featured nationally for over a year. Her recent intervention trials in high crime/underserved communities have been the focus of numerous invited addresses nationally for audiences such as the SC Medical Association, Society of Pediatric Psychology, NIH, Academy of Behavioral Medicine, Experiment Biology, Dietetic Association, Active Living Research, and the Research Triangle Institute International. She has numerous peer reviewed publications and is a Fellow of SBM, the American Psychological Association, and the Academy of Behavioral Medicine. She recently served as a reviewer for the Institute of Medicine Obesity Prevention Policy Report and is a member of the Pediatric Division 37 Task Force to develop national guidelines for obesity prevention.

Wilson has demonstrated continuous service to the SBM over the past 30 years. She served as Associate Editor of Annals, a member of the board of directors, chair of the publications committee, and received the Distinguished Service Award in 2003 and 2007. She also served as program chair, assisted in redesigning the website and in developing the recent mission statement and strategic plan for national impact. She looks forward to serving SBM if elected President.
**Personal Statement**

It is an honor to be a nominee for President of the Society of Behavioral Medicine. Since I became a member nearly 30 years ago, SBM’s unique multidisciplinary perspective has been central in shaping my career. In particular, the friends and colleagues I have met through SBM have inspired me to establish a program of research to improve the health and well being of underserved communities. During this time, I have also been fortunate to serve SBM as a board member, chair of publications, *Annals* Associate Editor, and program chair. These experiences have provided me with a unique historical perspective of the critical issues and challenges facing SBM and the role that behavioral medicine can play in improving the health and well being of individuals and society. It is a critical time for our society as we have worked hard to position SBM and the field of behavioral medicine as central in shaping public health policy. We have made some progress in integrating the biopsychosocial perspective in essential ways into the national forum for improving the health and well being of people, but continued leadership will be needed to strongly advocate and solidify our position.

As President I would work hard to strengthen SBM’s efforts to broaden our reach to influence public policy and national health care issues. I would expand our “reach” as an organization and field in three primary ways. First, as an organization we need to continue to engage young scholars from diverse backgrounds and support their growth and leadership development to advance and sustain our society. Second, the continued efforts of the SBM organization, as a whole, have positioned us to work together effectively to ensure that funding is devoted to SBM research and to broaden our impact on policy makers at a national level. Finally, SBM has a strong foundation of providing clinicians and health care providers with guidance for evidence-based practices, but more efforts are needed to effectively demonstrate the utility and value of these approaches to the broader public. It will be important for our society to utilize new technologies and marketing strategies that will help us have greater impact at individual, organizational, and national levels. If elected President, I am committed to continuing to build partnerships and develop strategic action plans to engage with national leaders and policy makers to advance the impact of the field of behavioral medicine.