

SOCIETY *of* BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE

Better Health Through Behavior Change

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Gary Bennett inducted as Society of Behavioral Medicine president-elect

WASHINGTON, DC – Duke University professor Gary G. Bennet Jr., PhD, began his term as president-elect of the Society of Behavioral Medicine on Saturday.

The Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) is a 2,200-member organization of scientific researchers, clinicians and educators. They study how behavior, biology and the environment interact, and they turn their findings into health interventions that improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities.

Bennett was inducted as SBM president-elect during the society's 37th Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions, held Wednesday through Saturday in Washington, DC. He officially began his one-year term during the society's business meeting Saturday morning. He will become society president in April 2017.

Bennett was selected as president-elect through a vote by SBM members. He is a long-time SBM member who planned the society's 2011 Annual Meeting as program chair and who served as a member delegate on the Board of Directors from 2011-14. He is a current member of SBM's Development Committee. He is a recipient of SBM's C. Tracy Orleans Distinguished Service Award.

As president, Bennett will increase SBM's mentoring activities to help members answer pressing questions about the future of their careers and the overall field of behavioral medicine, he said.

"How do we diversify our funding sources? Where do we fit in the fast moving worlds of precision medicine and digital health? Should we build partnerships with industry, and if so, how? I will expand our training and mentoring efforts to answer these and other urgent new questions," Bennett explained.

He'll also expand efforts to share SBM members' research and good clinical practices with the wider public, especially policymakers.

"Our research shows that the leading causes of death and disability are primarily behavioral in nature. So are their solutions," Bennett said. "We can help individuals manage chronic diseases in ways that are efficacious and cost-effective. We have insight into policies, practices, and messages that can both prevent and heal.

"As president, I will help SBM extend its dissemination efforts, inform public discourse, and advocate for moving in directions where the research evidence leads."

Bennett is the Bishop-MacDermott Family Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience, Global Health, and Medicine at Duke University. He directs Duke's Global Digital Health Science Center (Duke Digital Health), which leverages digital health technologies to improve health outcomes in medically vulnerable populations. Bennett also leads the Duke Obesity Prevention Program.

Bennett designs, tests, and disseminates digital health obesity treatments for primary care settings. He developed the interactive obesity treatment approach, which has been evaluated in several trials domestically and abroad. His work has demonstrated the effectiveness of coach-led, digital health weight loss and hypertension control interventions delivered via Web, smartphone, and interactive voice response systems.

Bennet has authored more than 125 scientific papers in the past decade. His research program has been continuously supported by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. He also co-founded two digital health startups: Crimson Health Solutions (acquired by Health Dialog in 2007) and Scale Down.

The Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) is a 2,200-member organization of scientific researchers, clinicians and educators. They study interactions among behavior, biology and the environment, and translate findings into interventions that improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. Visit www.sbm.org.

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