



SOCIETY OF
BEHAVIORAL
MEDICINE

April 26-29, 2023 | Phoenix, AZ

44th Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions

Translating Science into Impact



July 7, 2022

Dear SBM Members,

Following the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* and the resulting curtailment of access to reproductive healthcare, some of you have raised concerns about holding our 2023 Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions in Phoenix, AZ, a state that has limited access to abortion. The 2023 Annual Meeting Planning Committee leaders take this concern very seriously and we considered our options with a view toward achieving our organizational mission of proven science and better health *for all*.

We believe it is critical to spread the science of behavior change and its evidence *everywhere*. In fact, the states some say we should now avoid tend to be those with the worst health outcomes, where behavioral science—and your research and interventions—are needed most. Moreover, [as stated by the International Science Council](#), “More often than not, boycotts of conferences and events ultimately limit the sharing of knowledge between scientists and further isolate certain scientific communities from opportunities to exchange with their peers.”

After weighing our options, we have decided it is in the best interests of SBM to hold the 2023 Annual Meeting in Phoenix. It is also our intention to engage with the local community, identify Arizona-based advocacy groups working to improve health policies there, and find meaningful ways to support, amplify, and collaborate with those organizations before and during the Annual Meeting. We welcome the input of all SBM members on which organizations to connect with and which activities might be most meaningful and impactful. [Ideas can be submitted here.](#)

In our discussions, we did seriously consider the logistics of moving the meeting out of Arizona. Our analysis led us to conclude that the likely outcome would be a return to a virtual meeting, and you—our members—have told us you are not interested in another virtual meeting. There are a limited number of locations that can accommodate our meeting size, and when we remove all locations with policies and laws that restrict civil rights of certain groups, we end up with very few options. It is highly unlikely that any of those options would have space available in 2023, as meeting space contracts are signed at least 4 years in advance. We are also contractually obligated to cancel our existing meeting contracts before we can even inquire about an alternative location. Rather than risking a return to a virtual meeting, we will be proposing that SBM invest some portion of the funds that we would have lost in cancellation into our growing policy advocacy efforts as an expression of our 2023 Annual Meeting theme to translate science into impact.

Abstract submissions will open in mid-July and we strongly encourage you to join us in submitting your science. We especially encourage you to submit work on women's health, the health of marginalized populations, social and environmental context, and reproductive health that relates to the Annual Meeting's translational theme. For more details on abstracts and the conference, [click here](#).

Sincerely,

The 2023 Annual Meeting Planning Committee Leaders:

Margaret L. Schneider, PhD (President)

Stephanie L. Fitzpatrick, PhD (Program Chair)

Akilah Dulin, PhD (Program Co-Chair)

Ellen Beckjord, PhD, MPH (Immediate Past Program Chair)