

# ACADEMY OF BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE RESEARCH



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March 28, 2019

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Dear Fellows of the Academy of Behavioral Medicine Research (ABMR):

## **PRESIDENT ELECT:**

*Elissa Epel, PhD*  
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It's hard to believe that we will be gathering for the 2019 ABMR meeting in just three months' time. As shared previously, the 2019 meeting theme is "Minding the Gap: Understanding Differences and Disparities in Health and Disease." We'll meet at the **Lowes Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona, June 26-29, 2019**. Meeting details and logistics appear below. The attached Power Point highlights the meeting venue, including opportunities for exploration, enjoyment, and restoration during daily free time or before/after the meeting. The Power Point also includes "save the date" details for our 2020 meeting to be held at the 1440 Multiversity near Santa Cruz, California. Elissa has chosen a beautiful location for next year's meeting and is working on a stimulating program for 2020, which we'll hear more about in Tucson and in the coming months.

## **SECRETARY:**

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Before turning to the 2019 meeting, I'd like to share some thoughts and observations about the Academy and our annual meeting. One of my goals as President has been to listen to and engage with Fellows on the topic of ABMR, to identify opportunities to strengthen its mission and impact. Questions about ABMR's purpose have been a common theme of these conversations. Certainly, folks are quick to describe the magic and importance of the annual meeting. I've heard stories about memorable "Aha!" moments or of being inspired to try a new measure or approach that led to novel research directions, collaborations, and discoveries. Others have described the sheer privilege of being exposed to high-impact research from passionate and creative scientists in a small, single-session meeting format. Shared also have been wonderful memories of spending quality time in a lovely setting, in the company of colleagues and friends. Clearly, the annual ABMR meeting is something of which we can be proud. Since its inception, ABMR's annual meeting has consistently brought together top-tier scientists from multiple disciplines within and related to behavioral medicine to share, debate, and discuss important concepts, methods, and results; all with the goal of advancing our understanding of the biological, behavioral, psychological, social, cultural, and environmental factors that influence, and are influenced by, health and disease.

## **TREASURER:**

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Some have mused about whether ABMR has a purpose beyond the annual meeting which is, at present, the Academy's single activity, or work product. I started the year wondering if this was enough. I now believe that it is. Large behavioral medicine organizations comprised of scientists, clinicians, and clinician-scientists across the educational spectrum, from trainees to emeritus professors, serve many functions important to our field. For example, large meetings provide a venue for individuals and research groups with diverse interests and audiences to present their work. Yet, multi-track conferences, by definition, contribute to the siloing of science. Peer-review journals published by large behavioral medicine organizations provide important outlets for disseminating knowledge and large member networks facilitate unique career development and advancement opportunities. Moreover, the financial power of large behavioral medicine organizations supports efforts devoted to influencing policy and, ultimately, health. ABMR's mission is different from the larger behavioral medicine organizations, so it is not terribly surprising that its strategies, too, differ.

It seems to me that the qualities ascribed to the annual meeting by Fellows and guests with whom I've spoken over the past year address, in large part, the Academy's mission. The stipulation that elected members be distinguished scholars in their field supports our mission to "...promote excellence in our science..." by ensuring that the themes and science presented at the annual meeting are timely, important, and of the highest caliber. Limiting the number of sessions and speakers at the meeting enhances active discussion and debate among speakers and attendees; consistent with ABMR's mission to "...contribute guidance for the direction of the field." Moreover, the meeting's intimate size and single-track format facilitate transdisciplinary discussion and collaborations. These types of interactions are less likely to occur at larger meetings with parallel tracks and competing sessions. Finally, restricting the meeting to ABMR members, their guests, and outside speakers ensures that everyone at the meeting is somehow connected, which facilitates camaraderie and informal networking.

The success and impact of any organization depends on its mission, leadership, and membership. Money also helps. We will review and discuss our mission during the ABMR business meeting in June. The willingness of Fellows to participate in ABMR leadership is especially critical given the small size of our organization. So, if you have not yet or recently served on a committee, task force, the executive council, or as an officer of ABMR, I urge you to reach out and volunteer. These positions do require time and energy, but they are critical to our mission and, frankly, to ABMR's continued impact and existence. A perhaps less obvious leadership contribution is the nomination of new members to our organization. So, please, give some thought to deserving colleagues who could strengthen the mission and lasting impact of ABMR and nominate them for membership. Election as an ABMR Fellow confers formal recognition of scholarship and leadership in our field and members are invited to participate in our annual meeting. Yet, while "membership has its privileges," it also carries responsibilities. A small organization, ABMR depends on the timely payment of annual dues and attendance at the annual meeting to meet our fiscal responsibilities. Our organizational budget is lean and mainly supported by annual dues, as detailed in Treasurer's Reports prepared by Joe Schwartz. Meeting registration fees, in turn, support operational costs associated with the annual meeting including audiovisual support, food and beverage breaks, and shared meals. Support for registration and expenses of keynote speakers and awardees is generated through conference grants, the generosity of ABMR leaders, and, to a minor extent, general ABMR funds.

The number of people who attend the annual meeting is critical. In general, we need 70+ registrants to meet minimum facility costs. Attendance reports very clearly show that member registrations alone do not

cover the cost of our annual meeting, irrespective of location. And, while some Fellows have expressed concern about the guest pass program and the seeming growing number of “young” attendees, registered guests and non-member speakers are key to meeting registration numbers. I might also point out the simple arithmetic fact that, as we Fellows age, a growing number of behavioral medicine researchers are, by definition, younger than ABMR’s elected members. It’s unfair to the rising stars in our field, and to the future of behavioral medicine/ABMR, to let someone’s comparative youth influence our perceptions of their scholarship and leadership potential. Although the ranks of comparatively youthful attendees may have increased in recent years, the quality and importance of our meeting has not suffered; quite the opposite, recent meetings have remained highly stimulating and engaging. Please know that, whatever your thoughts on these topics, your observations and suggestions related to the goals, structure, and attendance at the annual meeting are always appreciated. I would be happy to discuss these issues via email or in person at our annual meeting in June. In the meantime...money.

**ABMR Annual Dues Reminder:** Please take time today to pay your annual dues. You can remit payment through the AMBR website at <http://academyofbrm.org/#/members-pages>. Dues are \$150 for Fellows and \$75 for Emeritus Fellows.



**ABMR 2019 Annual Meeting and Registration:** Our annual meeting will be held at the Lowes Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona (pictured above). The meeting will start at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> and conclude Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup> following a reception, dinner, and discussion on the meeting’s theme led by ABMR Fellows and rising stars in our field. In addition, given the importance of leadership to us, as individuals, and to the organization, we are offering a Leadership Development Workshop led by Norman Anderson. The half-day pre-conference workshop will be held 1:30 to 5:00 pm on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. A \$35 workshop fee will cover hotel costs associated with the workshop. **To register, please go to:** <http://www.academyofbrm.org/2019-annual-meeting/2019-annual-meeting> If you would like to request a **guest pass** for a colleague to attend the meeting, please email Lori McBurney ([lorimcb33@gmail.com](mailto:lorimcb33@gmail.com)) to request a guest pass registration form. Please note that a limited number of guest passes are available, so don’t delay making your request.

The meeting will feature keynote speakers, panel discussions, and seven scientific sessions centered, for the most part, on the meeting’s theme of **differences and disparities in health and disease**. We will learn about and discuss cutting-edge research and methods related to the causes and consequences of inequity and disparities across the lifespan; how we might think about and measure sex as a biological variable; how to differentiate between differences and disparities of all kinds, and the importance of this issue to intervention strategies and public health initiatives. These are far from “boutique” topics – while it

may be true that one scientist's main effect is another scientist's covariate, population trends in the US and abroad and funding policies warrant greater consideration and understanding of differences and disparities associated with sex, gender, socioeconomic status, immigration, culture, and race/ethnicity.

Keynote speakers include Dr. Michelle Albert of University of California, San Francisco, Dr. Girardin Jean-Louis of New York University, Fellow ABMR member, Dr. Richard Sloan of Columbia University, and faculty from the Center for Border Health, Department of Psychology, and Schools of Public Health and Medicine at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Organizers for our scientific sessions include a number of recently elected AMBR members including Drs. Kathy Goggin, Tené Lewis, Catherine Monk, John Ruiz, and Roxanne Silver. Julian Thayer and I, too, are organizing scientific sessions. Given enthusiastic support for increased discussion time during scientific sessions, each session will feature a moderated discussion including the speaker panel. We'll feature new member introductions and presentations by recipients of the 2019 Neal Miller Young Investigator and 2019 ABMR Lifetime Achievement Awards. More details about the scientific program will be added to the ABMR website soon ([www.academyofbmr.org](http://www.academyofbmr.org)).

**ABMR 2019 Annual Meeting Hotel Reservations:** The Lowes Ventana Canyon Resort is a 5-star facility. The attached Power Point illustrates the resort's many features, amenities, and local attractions. We were fortunate to negotiate a conference rate of \$159/night (single or double occupancy) and Lowes has waived its resort fee. Reservations can be made through our meeting registration website (see previous page) or directly on Lowes' ABMR reservation hyperlink: <https://www.loewshotels.com/ventana-canyon/abmr-2019-business-meeting>. If you are unable to access the site through the hyperlink, please cut and paste its address into your browser. If you prefer to contact the hotel directly, at 520-299-2020, please identify yourself as an attendee at the 2019 ABMR meeting, and ask to be included in the ABMR room block. Conference rates are available three days before and after the meeting for those who wish to spend more time at the resort and surrounding area. Please make conference plans soon to assure room availability. If you experience any difficulties with your reservation, please email me immediately so I can request additional rooms be added to our block ([hallmh@upmc.edu](mailto:hallmh@upmc.edu)).

**2019 ABMR Lifetime Achievement Award:** Nominations are open for this award. Nominations should include a letter describing the nominee's contributions to our field and a copy of their CV. Please submit your nominations to our secretary, Paige Green ([paige.green@nih.gov](mailto:paige.green@nih.gov)). Self-nominations are accepted. The deadline for nominations is April 15, 2019.

Planning for our 2019 continues and we will shortly send out announcements about a special feature of the Tucson meeting. I look forward to seeing you in Tucson!

All my best,



Martica Hall, PhD  
2018-2019 ABMR President

**Attachments:**

- Meeting registration form
- Power Point slides of the 2019 ABMR meeting venue and "save the date" announcement for our 2020 meeting being planned by Elissa Epel
- Ken Freedland's Health Psychology article on the Behavioral Medicine Research Council