

# Presidential Welcome and State of the Academy Address

Chudley E. "Chad" Werch, PhD, FAAHB, President, American Academy of Health Behavior

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**G**ood evening. As President of the American Academy of Health Behavior, it is my great pleasure and honor to welcome you to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Scientific Meeting of The American Academy of Health Behavior. This is a great thrill for me. This meeting is the culmination of a tremendous amount of work, involving many people over the last year. The planning and implementation of this year's Scientific Meeting has truly been a labor of love for many both in and outside of the Academy. Thank you for being here to share in this celebration with us tonight and throughout the week.

As I stated in my letter to you in your program materials, I encourage you to participate in every aspect of the Meeting. Some of the Meeting's highlights include, in addition to tonight's Scientific Awards Banquet and Ceremony, 1) invited presentations of state-of-the-art research summarizing the latest findings and methodologies of nationally and internationally renowned health behavior scientists; 2) research studies on health behavior topics orally presented one-on-one during poster sessions; 3) small-group and mentoring opportunities including morning roundtable discussions with invited speakers, research funding agency representatives, and journal editors, as well as lunch sessions designed to provide interaction between established researchers and early career researchers; 4) postmeeting afternoon professional development symposia; 5) recreational, educational and entertainment excursions in St. Augustine and the surrounding region; and 6) closing ceremonies, including the presentation of awards to exiting members of the Academy's board of directors, an introduction of the new board members, and a brief address by the incoming President of the Academy, Dr Robert J. McDermott. We look forward to your reactions to this year's meeting, and your

suggestions for future improvements. Please be sure to provide us feedback at the end of the Meeting using the evaluation form located in the first section of your program materials.

I'd like to start with a couple of brief stories. Two nuns are ordered to paint a room in the convent which is being renovated, and the last instruction of the Mother Superior is that they must not get even a drop of paint on their habits. After conferring about this for a while, the 2 nuns decide to lock the door of the room, strip off their habits, and paint in the nude. In the middle of the project, there comes a knock at the door. "Who is it?" calls one of the nuns. "Blind man," replies a voice from the other side of the door. The 2 nuns look at each other, shrug, and decide that no harm can come from letting a blind man into the room. They open the door, and a man enters. "Good God!" says the man. "Where do you want these blinds?"

A second story goes like this. A Boston preacher was completing a temperance sermon. With great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." And then, finally, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down. The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn # 365: 'Shall We Gather at the River.'" I won't even attempt to link these 2 stories to tonight's program.

We have a wonderful Scientific Awards program for you tonight, as outlined in the program agenda found on your dinner plate. I will open tonight's celebration with a brief report on the state of The Academy, and provide you with highlights of our Academy's accomplishments dur-

ing the past year, after which we will hold the induction of the new Fellows of The Academy, followed by the presentation of this year's Research Laureate Medallion to Dr John P. Elder by last year's Laureate Honoree, Dr Brian R. Flay, and ending with the most significant event of the evening, the Research Laureate address by this year's recipient, Dr Elder, after which there will be a question and answer session. Incidentally, this program is scheduled for to run for the next hour and a half to 2 hours, so if you need to stretch your legs or use the restrooms, please do so, but hurry back. You won't want to miss any of tonight's exciting and historic program.

I wish to be the first to recognize and pay tribute to the tremendous work of the Planning Committee in organizing and assembling a 5-star scientific program consisting of some of the most renowned health promotion and health behavior researchers and scholars in America, as well as abroad. In particular, I'd like to recognize Dr Brad Boekeloo, Chair of the Planning Committee and Scientific Sessions, for his superb leadership and extraordinary behind the scenes efforts to make this year's Scientific Meeting an inspirational success. Brad oversaw the selection, acquisition, communication and organization of the invited speakers' program, as well as the roundtable sessions. Brad, would you please stand and be recognized? I'd also like to thank Dr Lynda Ransdell, Abstract Chair for this year's Scientific Meeting, who was responsible for communications and solicitations associated with the scientific abstracts and presentation of our oral poster research. Lynda, would you please stand and be recognized? Very special recognition must be paid as well to Dr Terri Manning, Executive Director of The Academy, who has been instrumental in the successful conduct of the challenging and quickly expanding day-to-day operations of The Academy, as well as overseeing key logistics of this Scientific Meeting. Terri, would you please stand and be recognized? Finally, I must thank those closest to home, including Ms Joan Carlson and Ms Melissa Wezniak, Co-Conference Chairs, who have worked tirelessly to successfully address the seemingly infinite number of small, but critical details associated with making this meeting in St. Augustine special in every

sense of the word, and to Melissa for her steadfast help in ensuring the monthly Academy Board and Executive Committee meetings were productive and well documented. Joan and Melissa, would both of you please stand and be recognized?

If you need anything during the course of this meeting, please see either Joan or Melissa for assistance. Our goal is to ensure that this Scientific Meeting is one of, if not THE, most enjoyable and stimulating scientific meetings you've ever attended. Of course many others played a key role in planning this Scientific Meeting, and in the success of The Academy during the past year, but for the sake of brevity and to get to the core of tonight's program, you'll hear more about these individuals later on during the conference.

I wish to make some brief comments regarding the state of The Academy and, in particular, highlight a few of the main accomplishments from the past year. At the beginning of my term, as only the second President of The Academy, I noted that it was my intention to be a good steward of the spirit of The Academy, that spirit which emanates from the seminal dream to create and nourish the first and only professional association dedicated exclusively to the health education and health promotion researcher. This spirit is stronger than ever and evident today in our continually growing membership, the tremendous success of this year's Scientific Meeting in beautiful and historic St. Augustine, Florida, the foundation laid for perhaps an even greater Scientific Meeting in Sedona, Arizona next year, and the expanding diversity and number of talented individuals actively participating in making the dream of The Academy a reality.

In my inaugural address at the close of last year's Scientific Meeting in Napa Valley, I stated that The Academy is blessed, through her membership, with a wealth of great minds, extraordinary experience and skills, and tremendous energy, and that we had too much important work to conduct that has critical implications for the advancement of our profession for me to labor alone. When I called upon the giving spirit of our membership to volunteer their time, talent, and financial resources, I never in my most optimistic moments would have dreamt of the tremendous sacrifices that so many

have made this year on behalf of The Academy.

The year has passed quickly, and I am proud of the extraordinary effort and productivity of the chairs, and members, of each council and committee within The Academy, as well as the monumental work conducted by the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors. This work has resulted in creating a wide range of essential policies and procedures necessary for operating The Academy with efficiency and standardization, developing new by-laws amendments to strengthen the foundation of The Academy, producing communications materials, and taking steps to better market The Academy to a broader audience, identifying key competencies for training health promotion and health education researchers, mapping a strategy for obtaining critical revenue to sustain the growing objectives of The Academy, and taking important steps toward reaching out to collaborate with our sister professional organizations. However, none of these accomplishments gives me more pride than the single recent action the Board of Directors took recently in establishing the Judy Black Research Scholarship. This scholarship was created to support the professional development of early-career health promotion and health education researchers in the name of the recently departed spouse of our dear colleague and friend, Dr David R. "Randy" Black. This scholarship is evidence of the Academy's dedication to investing in the future enhancement and expansion of health behavior research, and for this alone, you can be proud of your Academy Board of Directors.

The Board is to be commended at the highest level for their sacrifices on behalf of The Academy throughout the year, and I'd like to recognize each of them at this time. Would you please stand when I call your name and remain standing, and would the audience please hold your applause until the full Board is standing? Elbert D. Glover, Immediate Past President; Robert J. McDermott, President Elect and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee; David R. "Randy" Black, Secretary; Mary Dinger, Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee; Robert M. Weiler, Chair of the Publications and Communications Council; Dennis L. Thombs, Chair of the Professional Development Council;

Bruce Simons-Morton, Chair of the Resource Development and Public Policy Council; James H. Price, Chair of the Membership and Development Council; Bradley O. Boekeloo, Chair of the Program Planning Committee, St. Augustine Scientific Meeting; Cheryl Dye, Delegate 1; Robert F. "Skip" Valois, Delegate 2; Mohammed R. Torabi, Delegate 3; Terri M. Manning, Executive Director; and Invited Guests of the Board; Lynda Ransdell, Abstract Chair, St. Augustine Scientific Meeting; Joan Carlson, Conference Chair; Melissa Wezniak, Co-Conference Chair St. Augustine Meeting; and Karen L. Liller, Chair of the Program Planning Committee, Sedona, Arizona. Please join me in honoring this most dedicated and talented Board.

I'd like to end my comments as I started a year ago, by thanking Elbert D. Glover, founder of the American Academy of Health Behavior, for initiating and laying a sound foundation upon which The Academy continues to build. E.D., would you please stand and be recognized? I also wish to continue to call upon those who would participate in the planning and building of an even stronger, more influential future Academy. Only through the increasing support and participation of our great membership, and looking outside The Academy to form critical linkages with scientific, governmental and health agencies to strengthen our financial and intellectual foundation, will we realize the true promise of our Academy, that promise being to advance the practice of health education and health promotion, through health behavior research.

In conclusion, I'd like to share with you a brief story. A student recently asked her major professor the following: "Professor, what is the secret to your success?" "Two words," "And, professor, what are they?" "Right decisions!" "And how do you make right decisions?" "One word." "And what is that?" "Experience!" "And how do you get experience?" "Two words." "And, professor, what are they?" "Wrong decisions!"

During my tenure as President of the Academy, I've made right decisions, and I've made some wrong decisions. However, I sincerely hope that because of my decisions as a whole, we have a stronger Academy, a more stable Academy, and an Academy better prepared for the future.

## Opening Address

Thank you for the opportunity and honor to serve as the second president of the American Academy of Health Behavior. Thank you very much.

### **Induction of New Fellows**

At this time I'd like to induct the new Fellows of the American Academy of Health Behavior.

Fellow member status is a superior distinction conferred by The Academy in recognition of the outstanding contribution to the field of health behavior, health promotion or health education research. As a Fellow of The Academy, these individuals are among a small group of the very finest researchers within the only professional organization dedicated solely to the advancement of health education and health promotion through research.

Fellow member status is only awarded to members of The Academy who meet the following criteria:

First, each of them has authored or co-authored at least 50 refereed research papers (eg, original data-based [quantitative or qualitative] research, data-based literature reviews, research syntheses, research theory papers) published in national or international journals that regularly report the findings of original health behavior, health education, or health promotion research.

Second, each of the individuals tonight has also met one of the following additional criteria:

1) Presented at least 75 scientific papers at national or international professional meetings;

2) Received at least 25 external research grants as a principal investigator or coprincipal investigator;

3) Received at least \$1.5 million (or US-dollar equivalents) in external research grants as a principal investigator or coprincipal investigator; or

4) Contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge in health behavior, health education, or health promotion through research conducted and disseminated of such magnitude as to equal any of the other aforementioned categories.

I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome each of our new Fellows, one at a time, into the family of distinguished researchers and scholars we call the American Academy of Health Behavior. I wish to personally commend them for

their exceptional past research successes, and I look forward to their future successes while Fellow members of The Academy.

Congratulations to the following individuals for their acceptance into the American Academy of Health Behavior at the highest level of membership as a Fellow.

Dr Collins Airhihenbuwa  
Professor  
Department of Biobehavioral Health  
The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, PA

Dr J. Wanzer Drane  
Professor of Biostatistics  
Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics  
School of Public Health  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC

Dr Donald Morisky  
Professor and Vice Chair  
Department of Community Health Services  
School of Public Health  
UCLA  
Los Angeles, CA

Dr Raymond Niaura  
Professor, Psychiatry & Human Behavior  
Ctr for Behavioral & Preventive Medicine  
The Miriam Hospital  
Providence, RI

Dr Bruce Simons-Morton  
Chief  
Prevention Research Branch  
National Institute of Child Health and  
Human Development  
Division of Epidemiology, Statistics and  
Prevention  
North Bethesda, MD

Please join me in congratulating our new Fellows of the Academy.

### **Introduction of Dr Brian Flay, FAAHB, Research Laureate, 2002**

It is with great pleasure and pride that I now introduce to you last year's Research Laureate honoree, Dr Brian R. Flay. My comments are extracted from a considerably lengthier introduction of Dr Flay by The Academy's inaugural Research Laureate, Dr Lawrence W. Green, during last year's Scientific Meeting in Napa Valley, California. UIC Distin-

guished Professor Brian R. Flay stands in the highest ranks among the investigators in our field, not only in the United States, but with international recognition as well. Professor Flay's doctoral studies in New Zealand and his postdoctoral studies with Thomas Cook and Donald Campbell at Northwestern University, under a Fulbright Fellowship, prepared him for his collaborative role with Allen Best in developing the program in health behavior studies at the University of Waterloo. Today, Dr Flay is Director of the NIDA-funded Prevention Research Training Program; Co-PI on the \$2.9 million PRC continuation grant from CDC, PI on grants from NIDA for the Aban Aya African-American Youth Health Behavior Project and the Positive Action Project, and Co-PI on many others. Professor Flay's publications span intervention and etiology research, reviews, theory development, and methodology, in more than 25 chapters and 150 empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals in psychology, public health and health education. He has been recognized and honored for these significant works with awards of distinction from the American School Health Association Research Council and the

University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (John P. McGovern Award in Health Promotion). He has been elected a Fellow of 3 professional and scientific societies, including the most significant recognition of his life, last year's Research Laureate honoree (I apologize for inserting my opinion). Please join me in welcoming Dr Brian Flay.

### **Program Conclusion**

In conclusion, I'd like to thank Dr John Elder for sharing some of his critical life's work and last year's Laureate Awardee, Dr Brian Flay, for his introduction of John, as well as the new Academy Fellows. Lastly, I wish to thank all of you for taking time from your busy schedules to share this extraordinary research experience with us this week.

Now, for a final word regarding the schedule of events for tomorrow, along with opportunities for networking and recreational activities in St. Augustine and the surrounding area, please welcome this year's Scientific Meeting Program Chair, Dr Brad Boekeloo; our Executive Director, Dr Terri Manning; and this year's Co-Conference Chairs, Joan Carlson and Melissa Wezniak.