



Center of Innovation to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Transformation

A Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Center of Innovation

Susan "Nicki" Hastings, MD, MHS, Director

September 13, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

I can think of no better candidate than Dr. Melanie Leggett for designation as Fellow of the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine. Dr. Leggett began her vocational life as Board registered polysomnographic sleep technologist. Her interest in behavioral approaches to sleep disorders led her to graduate training in Clinical Psychology and Behavioral Sleep Medicine. After completing her training with Dr. Kenneth Lichstein at the University of Memphis, Dr. Leggett was hired in 2003 by Dr. Jack Edinger to work in the Durham VA Behavioral Sleep Medicine clinic. As one of the first VA providers nationally whose clinical work was focused solely on Behavioral Sleep Medicine, Dr. Leggett accumulated unparalleled BSM expertise; particularly in regards to the treatment of Veterans.

Since Dr. Edinger's retirement in 2008, Dr. Leggett has served as Director of the Durham VA BSM clinic. During this time, she has greatly expanded BSM services for Veterans; from 100 consults per year in 2008 to almost 600 per year in 2018. She accomplished this without additional provider resources which have remained at only 1 full time and 1 part time (25%) provider. Her success in increasing patient access to BSM services was the result of innovative health services delivery strategies. For example, Dr. Leggett initiated group intake appointments and some of the first group-based BSM interventions (CBTI, IRT and CPAP Adherence) within the VA system. During group intakes, patients were oriented to the clinic and completed a battery of self-report questionnaires, allowing a provisional diagnosis and assignment to group-based interventions. This approach reduced patient wait times by several months.

Dr. Leggett's advocacy of BSM can also be seen in her role as an expert consultant on the CBTI training roll-out. She has served in this role since 2011 and continues to provide CBTI training to providers across the VA healthcare system. Dr. Leggett also helped to design the VA group-based CBTI training program and has served as an expert consultant on the pilot training program since 2019. The successful VA CBTI training program lead many clinicians to be interested in Board Certification in BSM. Recognizing this need, Dr. Leggett began offering consultation to VA clinicians interested in obtaining DBSM status. While some diplomate's offer paid consultation through their private practice, Dr. Leggett sought protected time during her VA tour of duty to offer consultation to VA clinicians wanting to sit for the DBSM exam.

In 2015, Dr. Leggett worked with other staff to design a new APA-accredited Psychology Postdoctoral fellowship program in Behavioral Medicine. She designed the BSM track (constituting half of all clinical hours) to ensure that trainees received all training requirements necessary to sit for the CBSM/DBSM exams. In 2018, Dr. Leggett began the process of applying to SBSM for accreditation as the first VA BSM training program. Approved in 2019, Dr. Leggett serves as Director of the Behavioral Sleep Medicine Track of the Psychology Post-doctoral Fellowship program. Graduates of these programs have gone on to serve as BSM providers across the VA and in academic institutions, and in professional service roles within SBSM. As a supervisor and mentor, Dr. Leggett is known for her commitment to empiricism, ethics, and the highest quality training.

The VA is the largest healthcare system in the nation and has more CBTI-trained providers (>900) than any other healthcare system in the US. Dr. Leggett has been central to the expansion of BSM in the VA, and through her work with trainees, she has contributed to the expansion of BSM more generally. I wholeheartedly recommend that she be recognized as a Fellow of the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine for her commitment to expanding the field of Behavioral Sleep Medicine and her professional altruism. I would be pleased to provide any additional information, as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christi S. Ulmer".

Christi S. Ulmer, PhD, CBSM, DBSM

Clinical Research Psychologist, Durham Center of Innovation to Accelerate Discovery and Practice Transformation (ADAPT)

Assistant Professor, Duke University Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences