

August 27, 2021

Committee for Fellow Status

Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine

**RE: Candidacy for Don Townsend, Ph.D.**

Dear Committee Members:

It is my pleasure to write a letter of recommendation endorsing Don Townsend's candidacy to become a Fellow in the Society of Behavioral Sleep Medicine. I have known Don since 1998 when I supervised his work in sleep medicine as part of his health psychology internship at Rush University Medical Center [RUMC], and have had the opportunity to observe the evolution of Don's career over the 23 years since then. We were fortunate to train many distinguished students in the RUMC Health Psychology Internship program, and I would place Don among the most accomplished program graduates based on his contributions to both Sleep Medicine, and the subspecialty of Behavioral Sleep Medicine.

I believe Don's CV speaks for itself, and will provide my personal observations to provide some additional depth to the experience described there. After completing training, Don spent 15 years in various sleep medicine positions in Minnesota. He assumed a leadership position in the Minnesota Sleep Society where he championed the interests of Behavioral Sleep Medicine. I had the opportunity to give a presentation at their annual meeting, and as part of that event I interacted with a variety of academic and community-based sleep medicine practitioners. The group included many of the founding members of sleep medicine from the Hennepin County, University of Minnesota, and Mayo programs. Through my interactions with the membership of the Minnesota Sleep Society that weekend, it was vividly clear how much respect the medical community had for Don and his leadership. His credibility as a professional in their group clearly elevated the place for Behavioral Sleep Medicine as a subspecialty throughout all activities of the organization. Don's thoughtful contributions and diligent work to advance sleep medicine generally, and the aims of the Minnesota Sleep Society specifically, not only provided him with a place at the table but also escalated the entire new subspecialty of Behavioral Sleep Medicine. Don gave BSM a champion and a voice that led to meaningful inclusion in the educational programs of the group, and positive assessments of the clinical contributions of BSM practitioners as a required component of any 'full service' sleep medicine program.

It is clear that Don continued that leadership since moving to Arizona. During this phase of his career, he not only advanced the profile of BSM in that community, but also assumed national leadership positions to continue his work to advocate for the field of BSM.

A historical challenge for growing the field of BSM is to attract the best and the brightest to join this subspecialty. I have no doubt that Don is doing his part to create opportunities for growth of BSM, and that the field would greatly benefit if we can continue to bring in professionals just like him. In my view, he is an ideal candidate for Fellow status in the SBSM.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'E. Stepanski'.

Edward J. Stepanski, Ph.D.

Fellow, AASM