

Biography

Dr. Robert L. Newton, Jr. is currently a Professor in the Population and Public Health division and Director of the Physical Activity and Ethnic Minority Health Laboratory at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center. He earned his bachelor's degree from Hampton University and his PhD from the University of Florida. His research examines the effect of lifestyle interventions on the health of African Americans across the lifespan, including studies with African American children, adults, men, and older adults. Dr. Newton utilizes a community-engaged research approach that involves collaborating with many community organizations. Another branch of his work incorporates the use of digital technology to foster behavior change. Dr. Newton has authored or co-authored over 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, largely related to the effects of physical activity on the health of African Americans. He has obtained federal, state, industry, and private foundation funding to support his research efforts totaling more than \$20 million in funding as Principal Investigator. Dr. Newton has been a member of SBM since 1995. For many years, his involvement was limited to submitting abstracts and attending the annual conference. Over the years, he developed a desire to start serving the organization. Dr. Newton first began serving by being an abstract reviewer, then he joined the Health Equity SIG Planning Committee in 2014. He was a member of the SBM Nominating and Welcoming Committees in 2018, the Development Committee since 2019, the Diversity Institute for Emerging Leaders, and the Awards Committee from 2021 - 2023. As his desire for leadership grew, Dr. Newton applied and was accepted into the SBM Leadership Institute in 2017, served as the Health Equity SIG Co-Chair from 2017 – 2019, and its Chair from 2019 – 2020. Then, President-elect David Conroy asked Dr. Newton to serve as the SIG Committee Chair, and he did so from 2021 – 2024. These activities have helped Dr. Newton to gain a deeper appreciation of how SBM functions, its members, and its potential impact in the future.