

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
MEDICAL SCHOOL  
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE

James E. Aikens, Ph.D., associate professor of family medicine, with tenure, Department of Family Medicine, Medical School, is recommended for promotion to professor of family medicine, with tenure, Department of Family Medicine, Medical School.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1992	University of Alabama
M.A.	1990	University of Alabama
B.A.	1987	Alfred University

Professional Record:

2007-present	Associate Professor of Family Medicine, University of Michigan
2001-2011	Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, University of Michigan
2000-2007	Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, University of Michigan
1993-2000	Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry, The University of Chicago

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Dr. Aikens has a substantial and successful role as a clinical and didactic teacher. He has maintained an active program of teaching residents in family medicine and fellows in clinical psychology, with particularly outstanding evaluations (4.7 average on a 5-point scale) relative to other similar presentations. He has performed similarly in continuing medical education teaching, with excellent evaluations in the 4.4 and higher range. His teaching in the School of Public Health likewise was very well received with an average score of 4.5 on a 5.0 scale. He also has taught internationally (Singapore, Thailand and Japan), again with strong ratings of 3.9 to 4.7 in Japan, despite the language barrier and need for an interpreter. A notable role filled by Dr. Aikens is that of research mentor and advisor for eleven residents, five doctoral candidates, two Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars fellows, and four junior faculty members applying for K awards and other grants. His mentorship of residents frequently involves his considerable expertise on the IRBMED in addition to assistance with study design, human subject protection, and IRB application issues. In fact, he was mentor to five of the department's eleven senior residents this past year for their scholarly projects, and received the Faculty Appreciation Senior Resident Award for his extensive and high quality work with them.

Research: Dr. Aikens is nationally recognized for his expertise in the psychological constructs of adherence by patients to both pharmacologic and lifestyle interventions in chronic disease, particularly diabetes mellitus. More recently, he has focused on the use of innovative technological approaches to enhancing adherence such as text messaging. He has secured substantial grant funding to support his research and currently has three major grants, two of

them from NIH and the third from the State of Michigan, to study how we can better provide care for depression and diabetes. Dr. Aikens currently ranks twelfth nationally among family medicine principal investigators in yearly NIH support. He has two five-year NIH grants as the principal investigator, with a combined total budget of \$3.8 million. His grant success and extensive publication record in his fields also have led to invitations to serve on multiple relevant journal editorial boards, current service as a manuscript reviewer for several additional journals, and multiple National Institutes of Health study sections. He was recently appointed as a full member of a key NIH study section, Behavioral Interventions and Outcomes (BMIO) and also has done several ad hoc reviews for the NIH. Dr. Aikens was recently appointed as editor-in-chief of *Chronic Illness (Sage)*, and has served for five years as associate editor of *Family Practice*.

Most recently, he has developed a significant interest in adapting cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to primary care, and ethical safeguards in behavioral research and began teaching the CBT approach internationally. He has adapted CBT to simple strategies that can be used in an office visit and allowing referral only in the most severe instances. He has used diverse instructional approaches including role-playing exercises and video simulations. Dr. Aikens' work has focused on adherence as a mediating variable in the relationship between depression and several chronic diseases, the degree to which depression may alter adherence, the psychological constructs with which patients with chronic disease approach self-care and the accuracy of self-report in the assessment of chronic disease self-care and adherence. This considerable body of academic and scientific activity has resulted in a total of 74 research-based publications in influential psychology, psychiatry and medical journals that have been cited 3,790 times (h-Index=31, i10-index=54). The sum total of this work has clearly and significantly altered the research agenda in this field, as well as influenced clinical practice by both primary care and specialty physicians.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

Aikens JE: Prospective associations between emotional distress and poor outcomes in type 2 diabetes. *Diabetes Care* 35:2472-2478, 2012.

Aikens JE, Trivedi R, Aron DC, Piette JD: Integrating support persons into diabetes telemonitoring to improve self-management and medication adherence. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 30:319-326, 2015.

Aikens JE, Trivedi R, Heapy A, Pfeiffer P, Rosland AM, Piette JD: Potential impact of incorporating a patient-selected support person into mHealth for depression. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 30:797-803, 2015.

Piette JD, Valenstein M, Eisenberg D, Feters MD, Sen A, Saunders D, Watkins D, Aikens JE: Rationale and methods of a trial to evaluate a depression telemonitoring program that includes a patient-selected support person. *Journal of Clinical Trials* 5:205. doi: 10.4172/2167-0870.1000205, 2015.

Piette JD, Striplin D, Marinec N, Chen J, Trivedi R, Aron CA, Fisher L, Aikens JE: A mobile health intervention supporting heart failure patients and their informal caregivers: a randomized comparative effectiveness trial. *Journal of Medical Internet Research* (in press).

Service: Dr. Aikens' substantial clinical and academic achievements are particularly impressive in light of his prior service on the institution's IRBMED, as well as membership on the IRBMED Risk Definition Subcommittee. Through this service, he is recognized as a critical internal consultant on complex human subjects issues related to behavioral interventions. Since then, he has been elected to a three-year term as the chair of a 320-member Integrated Primary Care Special Interest Group in the Society of Behavioral Medicine. He is an active member of national committees defining best practices and policy, including the Adherence Self-Report Working Group, where he is one of five behavioral scientists invited to Bethesda by the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) to define best practices for measuring adherence and whose recommendations are in press. In addition, he has served on the Expert Panel on Adherence, which meets monthly to identify and archive translatable strategies for improving medication adherence, as part of the National Diabetes Education Program, jointly sponsored by the NIH and CDC. Dr. Aikens also is involved in the Health Policy Committee that creates several white papers and position statements each year for Society of Behavioral Medicine. He also served as a session chair for Blood Glucose and Diabetes Management at the Third Annual World Congress of Diabetes held in the People's Republic of China.

Dr. Aikens maintains a significant (twenty percent) commitment to clinical practice as a clinical psychologist, with particular expertise in CBT and the treatment of patients with anxiety and panic disorders. Dr. Aikens has established consultative practices at the Briarwood and Ypsilanti Family Medicine Centers, including working with both resident and attending faculty physicians in a collaborative case management model of mental illness care in primary care. This level of commitment exceeds that of most research-oriented clinical psychologists, especially considering his substantial contributions to service. Of note, he is considering implementing a new approach to CBT that is shorter and more applicable in primary care, which if effective, should be of great significance to assisting family medicine and other primary care physicians in helping their patients.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "Dr. Aikens is a unique individual who will continue to succeed in his research and in influencing the medical care of persons with diabetes."

Reviewer B: "By the usual academic standards, Dr. Aikens has been quite productive: he has won over \$16M in extramural grant funding as a PI or Co-I (>13 grants), of which \$6.5M is currently active. He has published 75 peer-reviewed papers, mostly in the top-tier journals in our field...He is a frequent speaker at national and international scientific meetings, and has been active as an extramural grant reviewer...His productivity shows no hint of flagging; if anything, he is becoming more productive with age."

Reviewer C: “As evidence of how valued his opinions are, he has regularly served on numerous NIH and professional review panels, including for several professional associations in psychology, diabetes, and family medicine.”

Reviewer D: “He is a nationally recognized researcher who has made substantial contributions to our understanding of the epidemiologic factors that impact diabetes self-management and how technology can be utilized to improve self-management and outcomes associated with chronic illness....I would place him in the top 5% of scholars nationally who work in his areas of expertise.”

Reviewer E: “...Dr. Aikens is a productive, successful, and well-known senior psychologist and researcher, with significant impacts in his area of work.”

Reviewer F: “His recent work in examining the relationship between depression and diabetes self-management is an example of his systemic and programmatic efforts to make a significant contribution to the profession, enabling him to achieve national and even some international recognition.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Dr. Aikens is an outstanding academic clinical psychologist with a substantial program of research in adherence and its influence on the care of chronic disease and depression. He has succeeded as an independent investigator, and is now a national leader and consultant in the complexities of studying the psychological constructs of chronic disease care and the relationship between adherence, depression and chronic disease management. I am very pleased to enthusiastically recommend James E. Aikens, Ph.D. for promotion to professor of family medicine, with tenure, Department of Family Medicine, Medical School.



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Marschall S. Runge, M.D, Ph.D.  
Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs  
Dean, Medical School

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