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COSSA Washington Update

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WELCOME TO 2008!

Happy New Year! This is the first issue of Volume 27 of the newsletter of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA). Our goal is to inform the social and behavioral science community about activities in Washington, DC and elsewhere that have important implications for the conduct of research and its dissemination to policy makers. We appear for the most part biweekly (with the exception of February, August, and December). In early March, we will present a special issue that will analyze President Bush's proposed Fiscal Year 2009 federal budget for over 50 agencies important to the production of social and behavioral science research. We hope you will appreciate our coverage and if you have any questions or comments please let us know at cosssa@cosssa.org. May your New Year be productive and enjoyable!

FY2008 APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS ENDS WITH OMNIBUS BILL; BUSH GETS HIS WAY

On December 18, the Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriation Act, which provided FY 2008 funding for agencies and programs across the government except in the Department of Defense. (The DOD spending bill was approved earlier). On December 26, President Bush signed the consolidated bill and thus the long and arduous FY 2008 appropriations process came to an end.

With his earlier veto of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education spending bill and his threat to veto many of the others, the President made it clear he was not going to back off his position that total discretionary spending not exceed the number proposed in his February budget. Faced with this intransigence the Democratically-controlled Congress met the President's demand. In doing so, Congress was forced to reduce some of its earlier, more promising FY 2008 funding decisions. The chart below illustrates the final FY 2008 numbers.

National Science Foundation

The endgame significantly affected the National Science Foundation (NSF), which came out of the House and Senate committee process with increases around ten percent. Yet, despite its inclusion as part of the President's American Competitiveness Initiative, despite a reauthorization in the American COMPETES Act that promised to double its funding in seven years, and despite much rhetoric about the importance of basic research to innovation and competitiveness, in the end NSF wound up with a 2.5 percent boost. The Research and Related Activities account, received a 1.2 percent increase, while the Education and Human Resources directorate went up four percent. Congress did finally buy NSF's pleas for increases for its administration and management account, raising it by 14.2 percent.

National Institutes of Health

For FY 2008, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) received \$29.228 billion in funding, an increase of \$329 million or a 1.1 percent increase over the FY 2008 funding level. This sum also provides a \$196 million increase from 2007 to 2008 in the transfer from NIH to the Global HIV/AIDS Funds, bringing the actual program level for NIH to \$28.942 billion, an increase of \$133 million (0.46 percent) over the FY 2007 funding level. The bill also includes a general provision restoring the authority to transfer one percent of the amounts made available for National Research Service Awards to the Health Services Administration (HSA) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). The NIH Reform Act of 2006 eliminated this authority.

For the NIH's National Children's Study (NCS), the bill allocated \$112.9 million in funding to continue the study instead of the \$110.9 million proposed by both the House and the Senate. For the Director's Pioneer awards, New Innovator awards, and Bridge awards, the bill provided the FY 2007 funding level. Funding for the Pathways to Independence program, which is funded through the individual institutes and centers, was appropriated at the President's FY 2008 requested level.

The omnibus provided funding for the recently created clinical and translational science awards divided between the Common Fund and the National Center for Research Resources (NCRR). The Appropriations Committees noted that they remain supportive of the program but expressed concern regarding the abrupt changes in funding policies implemented in 2007. For the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program, the bill provides \$220.5 million in funding.

The omnibus also mandated "open access" to research data as the results of Federal funding. The measure states that the "Director of the National Institutes of Health shall require that all investigators funded by the NIH submit or have submitted for them to the National Library of Medicine's PubMed Central an electronic version of their final, peer-reviewed manuscripts upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of date of publication: Provided, That the NIH shall implement the public access policy in a manner consistent with copyright law." (See related story below).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The bill appropriated \$6.4 billion in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), \$173 million above the FY 2007 funding level. This sum includes evaluation set-asides authorized by section 241 of the Public Health Service Act.

For the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) the bill provided \$113.6 million in funding. NCHS funding is entirely via transfer funds. Within the set-aside, \$48.5 million is included for Health Marketing.

For the CDC's Chronic Disease Prevention, Health Promotion, and Genomics program, the bill allocated \$848.7 million in funding. This sum includes "sufficient funds" for CDC to conduct a study of the impact of school nutrition and physical activity programs on academic outcomes. The funding will also support an Institute of Medicine (IOM) study regarding various means that could be employed to reduce dietary sodium intake to levels recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Resources are also provided within community health promotion for activities related to sleep disorders, including CDC's participation in the national sleep awareness roundtable.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) received \$334.6 million in funding for FY 2008, including \$30 million for comparative effectiveness research conducted through the agency's Effective Health Care Program.

Census

Congress provided the Census Bureau its full funding to continue the ramp-up to the 2010 count and the 2007 Economic Census. Unlike the President's proposed budget, the final bill included funding at \$9.1 million for the partnership program that promotes outreach to many different communities to help encourage participation in the Census. The Salaries and Expenses account included \$24 million to continue the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), although at the cost of an \$8 million reduction for surveys of the service sector of the economy.

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), part of the Economics and Statistics Administration, received \$77.5 million, about halfway between its FY 2007 appropriation and the President's proposed FY 2008 number.

National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics

Again caught up in the Congress' need to correct the President's proposed funding for state and local law enforcement programs, including COPS, both the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) saw its hopes for attaining the increases proposed in the President's budget fall by the wayside. NIJ saw its base funding reduced to \$37 million, with \$19 million designated for the National Law Enforcement Technology Centers. NIJ will also receive funding from the Violence Against Women appropriation, Byrne funding, and the DNA initiative, although at reduced levels from previous years. BJS received essentially level-funding from FY 2007, with the report language again stressing the importance of the National Crime Victimization Survey.

Education

The Title VI International Education and Foreign Language programs received a \$3 million plus increase over FY 2007. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), after a two-year respite, was again loaded down with earmarks for projects Congress deemed worthy. The funding for the Javits Fellowship program, which provides support for graduate students in the social sciences, arts, and humanities, continues to erode. Over the past few years, the program has been level-funded, but across-the-board (ATB) cuts (this year at 1.747 percent) in the larger bill, lead to the chipping away of its money. The Thurgood Marshall Legal Opportunity program survived another year, albeit with slight reduced funding due to the ATB cut.

The Institute for Education Sciences (IES), for the most part received level funding minus the 1.747 percent. Congress did not accept the \$20 million increase proposed for the National Center for Education Statistics, but it did double the funding for Statewide Data Systems and boost Assessment spending by over \$10 million.

Homeland Security

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) University Programs' account, which includes the Centers for Excellence and the scholarship and fellowship programs, received a slight increase over FY 2007 and \$10 million more than the President proposed. This will help fund the new Centers that Undersecretary for Science and Technology Jay Cohen has proposed. The Human Factors division, which DHS proposed to double to \$12.6 million, got \$14.2 million. However, of that total \$7.5 million is designated for RTI International to create an Institute for Homeland Security Solutions.

Agriculture

Most of the agriculture research and statistics programs received slight increases over FY 2007, although somewhat below what the President's budget proposed. The National Agricultural Statistics Service's increase will help complete the Census of Agriculture.

Educational and Cultural Exchanges

One of the funding success stories of recent years has occurred at the Department of State, where funding for educational and cultural exchanges has more than doubled in the past five years. This set of programs, including the Fulbright Scholars, has become a priority for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Congress has gone along. In addition, the program has added new dimensions to attract exchange students from Muslim countries and to bring what the Department calls "key influencers" abroad to experience America.

FINAL FY 2008 APPROPRIATIONS

(Numbers in Thousands)

| AGENCY | FY 2007 APPROP | FY 2008 REQUEST | FY 2008 FINAL |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| <u>National Science Foundation (Total)</u> | 5,915.6 | 6,429.0 | 6,065.0 |
| Research and Related Activities | 4,764.7 | 5,131.7 | 4,821.5 |
| Education and Human Resources | 698.0 | 750.6 | 725.6 |
| <u>Health and Human Services</u> | | | |
| <i>Disease Control & Prevention</i> | 6,265.7 | 5,982.7 | 6,375.6 |
| Health Statistics | 109.0 | 110.0 | 113.6 |
| <i>Healthcare Research & Quality</i> | 319.0 | 329.6 | 334.6 |

| | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Evaluation Policy Research | 39.6 | 46.8 | 46.8 |
| <i>National Institutes of Health (Total)</i> | 28,899.8 | 28,621.2 | 29,228.5 |
| Office of the Director | 1,046.9 | 517.1 | 1,109.1 |
| Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism | 436.3 | 136.5 | 436.3 |
| Aging | 1,047.3 | 1,047.1 | 1,047.3 |
| Cancer | 4,797.6 | 4,782.1 | 4,805.1 |
| Child Health and Human Development | 1,254.7 | 1,264.9 | 1,254.7 |
| Deafness and Communication Disorders | 393.7 | 393.7 | 394.1 |
| Drug Abuse | 1,000.6 | 1,000.4 | 1,000.7 |
| Environmental Health | 642.0 | 637.4 | 642.3 |
| Human Genome | 486.5 | 484.4 | 486.8 |
| Mental Health | 1,404.5 | 1,405.4 | 1,404.5 |
| Minority Health | 199.4 | 194.5 | 199.6 |
| Nursing Research | 137.4 | 137.8 | 137.5 |
| Heart, Lung and Blood | 2,922.9 | 2,925.4 | 2,922.9 |
| Diabetes, Digestive Diseases | 1,705.9 | 1,708.0 | 1,705.9 |
| Neurological Disease and Stroke | 1,535.5 | 1,537.0 | 1,543.9 |
| Allergy and Infectious Diseases | 4,367.7 | 4,592.5 | 4,560.7 |
| General Medical Sciences | 1,935.8 | 1,941.5 | 1,935.8 |
| Eye | 667.1 | 667.8 | 667.1 |
| Center for Research Resources | 1,133.2 | 1,112.5 | 1,149.4 |
| Complementary and Alternative Medicine | 121.6 | 121.7 | 121.6 |
| Fogarty | 66.4 | 66.6 | 66.6 |
| Library of Medicine | 320.9 | 312.6 | 321.0 |
| Arthritis and Musculoskeletal | 508.2 | 508.1 | 508.6 |
| Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering | 296.9 | 300.5 | 298.6 |
| <u>Agriculture</u> | | | |
| National Research Initiative | 190.2 | 256.5 | 192.2 |
| Economic Research Service | 75.2 | 82.5 | 77.9 |
| Agricultural Statistics | 147.3 | 167.7 | 163.4 |
| <u>Commerce</u> | | | |
| Census Salaries and Expenses | 196.6 | 202.8 | 202.8 |
| Census Periodic Programs | 696.4 | 1,027.4 | 1,027.4 |
| Econ and Statistics Administration | 79.8 | 85.0 | 81.1 |
| <u>Education</u> | | | |
| Research, Develop, Dissemination | 166.6 | 162.5 | 159.7 |
| Regional Labs | 65.5 | 65.5 | 65.6 |
| Statistics | 90.0 | 119.0 | 88.4 |
| Statewide Data Systems | 24.6 | 49.2 | 48.3 |
| Assessment | 93.1 | 116.6 | 104.1 |
| FIPSE | 22.0 | 22.0 | 122.5 |
| Int'l Education & Foreign Languages | 105.8 | 105.8 | 109.0 |

| | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Javits | 9.7 | 9.8 | 9.5 |
| Thurgood Marshall | 2.9 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| <u>Homeland Security</u> | | | |
| University Programs | 48.6 | 38.7 | 49.3 |
| Human Factors Division | 6.8 | 12.6 | 14.2 |
| <u>Housing and Urban Development</u> | | | |
| Policy Development & Research | 50.1 | 65.0 | 51.4 |
| <u>Justice</u> | | | |
| National Institute of Justice | 54.3 | 45.0 | 37.0 |
| Bureau of Justice Statistics | 34.6 | 45.0 | 34.8 |
| <u>Labor</u> | | | |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics | 548.1 | 574.4 | 544.3 |
| <u>State</u> | | | |
| Educational and Cultural Affairs | 445.7 | 486.4 | 505.4 |

On December 19, the Senate confirmed Steven H. Murdock's nomination as Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. He will replace Louis Kincannon, who resigned in November 2006, but who agreed to stay on until his successor was confirmed. After 13 months, Kincannon can finally step down.

A day earlier, the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs held a hearing on Murdock's nomination. He was introduced by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX) who expressed her confidence in the Texas demographer. Hutchison outlined Murdock's extensive resume and qualifications (see Update, [June 25, 2007](#)).

Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE), who chaired the hearing, expressed concern regarding the accuracy of the decennial census, referencing both under- and over-count problems in the past. Murdock promised to do the best he can and cited the increasing use of technology to assist in overcoming these problems.

Steven H. Murdock

Technology use, particularly employing the Internet as an option for conducting the Census, was a major topic of discussion. Carper wondered (and said he was also speaking for his colleague Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK)) why the Bureau has dismissed the Internet as an alternative method of having people respond to the Census. Carper pointed out that while a large percentage of Americans use the Internet to file taxes, the Bureau has not warmed up to it as a tool for the count. He also asked about the experiences of Canada and Australia which have successfully collected census data via the Internet. Murdock suggested he was willing to ascertain possible Internet response, but claimed it was too late for 2010.

Carper and the Committee's Ranking Member Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) also asked a number of questions indicating their dismay at the rising cost of the decennial. Collins, in particular, focused her inquiries on the extensive use of contractors as a source of the increased costs, referencing a recent GAO report. Murdock said that one of the first things he would do as Director was an evaluation of the contracts and see if the costs of the Census could be reduced. There was specific reference to the problems already encountered with the hand-held computers.

Protecting census data was another issue of interest to the Committee. Murdock agreed that it is the responsibility of the Bureau to ensure that personal data of those who respond to its collection efforts are protected against all forms of intrusion and disclosure. He pledged to review and evaluate the practices and procedures used to ensure the completeness of the 2010 Census, the American Community Survey (ACS), and other products from the Bureau, and to protect the confidentiality of a respondent's personal information.

The nominee complimented the Bureau's staff for its successful collection, analyses, and dissemination of its data. When asked about his qualifications to run such a large operation, Murdock responded that he is confident that his many years of experience with Census data and managing a State data center provide the necessary background to assume the major task of leading the Bureau. He also pledged to keep the lines of communication open with Congress and Census stakeholders.

SEDGWICK NAMED OJP ACTING HEAD; HAGY GETS HEARING

Jeffrey Sedgwick, director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), now has a second job. President Bush, on January 4, named Sedgwick the new Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). He replaces Regina Schofield, who resigned in late 2007.

Sedgwick, who has been at BJS almost two years, is on leave from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst where he is a Professor of Political Science. He has a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Virginia.

OJP administers federal anticrime grants through the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), and includes BJS, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), and the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC). BJA and NIJ suffered significant funding reductions in the FY 2008 budget endgame.

Jeffrey Sedgwick

David Hagy, who used to be the number two person at OJP, was nominated by President Bush to become the director of the NIJ in early July (see Update, [July 9, 2007](#)). He had been leading the organization on an acting-basis since December 2006. On December 18, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on Hagy's nomination.

With Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) presiding in place of Judiciary Committee chairman, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Hagy joined four other nominees (three for Justice Department posts and one for the Office of National Drug Control Policy) before the committee.

In questioning Hagy, Cardin expressed interest in gangs and gang violence. Hagy responded by discussing NIJ's *Safe Neighborhoods Initiative* and the technical assistance provided to local governments to develop anti-gang strategies based on the research supported by NIJ.

Cardin also wanted to discuss the prisoner re-entry problem and the continued high rate of recidivism. The Senator indicated that he believed faith-based and community-based organizations were doing significant work in helping with the re-entry problems. Hagy noted the research NIJ has funded including a five-year study by the Urban Institute whose results will be available in 2008. He also suggested that re-entry efforts must be comprehensive and focus on drug rehabilitation, employment opportunities, and health care availability. He agreed with Cardin that the faith-based organizations are successful because of their knowledge of community activities and opportunities that released prisoners can utilize.

Although the Senate confirmed three of his fellow nominees before the end of the year, Hagy still awaits a Senate vote.

NAS PANEL ASSESSING NIJ HOLDS FIRST MEETING

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is the research arm of the Department of Justice. In recent years it has become an often-neglected, small-budget, earmarked agency without a non-acting director since August 2005. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has issued two reports criticizing its grant management practices.

On December 20 and 21, the National Academies' new committee to "Assess the Research Programs of the NIJ" held its first meeting. Chaired by University of Maryland Criminology Professor Charles Wellford, the panel will spend 25 months examining the NIJ's social science and technology development and testing programs to assess and make recommendations for the agency's organizational structure and its short and long term strategic planning. The study also hopes to determine how to enhance NIJ's impact on crime and criminal justice policies.

These first sessions heard from NIJ officials, criminologists, and outside observers, including COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver. NIJ Director-Designate David Hagy (*see previous story*) led off with his own sense of the agency's difficulties. The first and perhaps most overriding question is the appropriate role for the Federal government in crime and criminal justice policy. For Hagy, NIJ is there to support evidence-based studies of best practices and disseminate them through training and technical assistance to the front lines of crime at the state and local level. NIJ sits organizationally in the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). The research and statistics efforts (the latter through the Bureau of Justice Statistics) usually take a back seat to the major purpose of the Office, which is to dispense grant funds to state and local law enforcement agencies. Unlike, NIH, NIJ conducts no in-house research.

The Agency consists of two major centers: the Office of Research and Evaluation, led by Thom Feucht, which oversees the social science side of the house; and the Office of Science and Technology (OST), led by John Morgan, which develops new equipment and tools and includes the major DNA initiative. The OST has been heavily affected by congressional earmarking over the years. NIJ also includes an International Center that looks at transnational crime issues.

Although NIJ's base budget has been in the mid-\$50 million range for a number of years, the agency receives funds from other parts of the DOJ budget and spends around \$250 million. The significant cut to \$37 million in the FY 2008 appropriation includes \$19 million in earmarked funds that will make things difficult. The social science budget, which has been in the \$20 million area, shrunk to \$11-12 million in FY 2007 and will likely be significantly less than that in FY 2008.

NIJ from the Outside

The NAS invited a number of researchers and others who have worked with NIJ over the years to testify to the committee. Former COSSA President and Carnegie Mellon University Professor Al Blumstein raised a number of issues that seemed all too familiar. In 1999, Blumstein chaired a committee to "Design the Structure of a Justice Research and Statistics Program in the Department of Justice." Wellford was a member of that panel.

Speaking to the current panel, Blumstein argued for a systems perspective to the crime and the criminal justice system suggesting there was too much fragmentation of effort. Drawing on his experience as principal investigator for the NSF-funded National Consortium on Violence Research for the past eleven years, he also noted the importance of capacity building for criminology research and indicated that the field had grown enormously in recent years. This exacerbates the problem of “abysmal” funding for this research.

Echoing some of his comments at the 2007 NIJ research conference (see Update [August 6, 2007](#)), Blumstein expressed concern about the lack of independence for NIJ over the years and the enormous turnover in the Director’s position. He also wondered whether the DOJ was the “proper home” for NIJ, but could suggest no other realistic possibilities. He also decried the lack of continuity in the research program. NIJ needs to do a better job of accumulating research results, he argued.

Gary LaFree, a member of the COSSA Executive Committee and head of the Department of Homeland Security’s Center of Excellence on Terrorism and the Responses to Terrorism at the University of Maryland, testified that NIJ has a role in the anti-terrorist game. He argued that a criminal justice approach to terrorism has merit and NIJ should be supporting human factors research to help in the response. In a number of areas, including how criminal behavior is helping to fund terrorist activities, NIJ could play a useful role, he told the panel.

Rick Rosenfeld, Professor of Criminology at the University of Missouri, St. Louis, told the panel that NIJ’s social science program should remain at DOJ, conduct policy relevant research that would include meta-analyses of key problems, and meet the needs of NIJ’s clients – criminal justice practitioners. He also argued for improving that National Crime Victimization Survey, so that it could provide data for localities.

Given COSSA’s perspective of interacting with social science research support across the Federal agencies, Silver told the panel that he often compared support for crime research with support for education research. Although crime and education are usually designated by the public as important policy issues, they are both mostly under state and local control. Both education and crime research have been perennially underfunded, particularly in comparison to what gets spent on programs in each area. This occurs because policymakers often suggest the need for research in both areas is limited since everybody already knows the answers and the key is getting funds to practitioners – police departments and classroom teachers. However, in recent years program evaluation has become important and the studies in both issue areas have stressed evidence-based research with a preferred methodology – randomized control trials. There is also a growing focus on what works. Yet, both education and crime research have difficulties with congressional support. Silver suggested the Committee discuss this with Russ Whitehurst, Administrator of the Institute for Education Sciences.

He also suggested that other agencies are using terminology such as “transformative” and “translational” research to signal new approaches. There has also been much discussion of “roadmaps” to new research agendas. Perhaps, NIJ could learn some lessons here.

The Committee will meet again in late March.

OBSSR RELEASES STRATEGIC PROSPECTUS

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) recently released its strategic prospectus, *The Contributions of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research to Improving the Health of the Nation: A Prospectus for the Future*. Developed over a year of consensus building and deliberation, the prospectus addresses “strategic recommendations for future research priorities in the behavioral and social sciences.” In the prospectus preface, OBSSR Director David B. Abrams notes that “if addressed, these priorities can make a substantial and critical contribution to the mission of the National Institutes of Health to improve the Nation’s health and well being.” Abrams also notes that “in examining past accomplishments and what we know today, it becomes clear how behavior – both individual and collective – bridges biology and society. . . . The biological ‘causes’ and the socio-behavioral –ecological ‘causes of the causes’ are two sides of the same coin.” The most pressing, persistent, and emergent population health challenges also necessitate strong partnerships among the biological, social, behavioral, economic, and public health sciences, Abrams emphasizes.

The prospectus recognizes that “the infrastructure of our health care system is threatened by a ‘perfect storm’ of rising demand for health care, an aging and increasingly economic disparate populations, and unsustainable costs. To address these health challenges effectively and efficiently requires leveraging the full potential of our scientific knowledge...Health across the lifespan is a function of many interwoven influences, from genetic and molecular levels to economic and geopolitical levels.” Accordingly, this presents new challenges in understanding the roots of health and human behavior along with new opportunities to answer some of the most pressing questions facing social and behavioral scientists including:

- What links exist among in utero and early childhood exposures to trauma, stress, adversity, alcohol, tobacco and other pathogens, and later lifespan aspects of quality of social relationships, gene expression, neurobehavioral and immune function, and chronic disease and disability?
- How do positive aspects of health such as an optimistic outlook or strong family ties translate into disease resistance? Conversely, how does negative affect or social isolation decrease resistance to disease?
- What is the basis of mental illness and addictions and how can biomedical, behavioral, and social scientists work together to improve early detection, prevention, and treatment?
- How do differences in educational and economic opportunity, access to medical care, cultural mores, and discrimination influence health outcomes?
- How can we better understand motivation, risk perceptions, and decision making and relate these mechanisms to health communications, sustained maintenance of behavior change, and new technology like Internet-based self-change and health literacy interventions?
- What are the cultural strengths and health-enhancing resources of various racial and ethnic groups? How do these factors account for resilience to social and resource inequities?
- What behavioral or social interventions could improve the prevention of injury and violence?
- How can we strengthen the science of dissemination and the dissemination of the science of behavior change?

The Four Core Elements of OBSSR's Vision

The four core elements of OBSSR's vision are: 1) "Next generation" basic science; 2) Interdisciplinary Research; 3) Systems-thinking approaches to health; and 4) Population impact.

1. **"Next-generation" basic science:** OBSSR will support and facilitate the next generation of basic behavioral and social science research informed by breakthroughs in complementary areas such as genetics, informatics, computer sciences, measurement, methods, and multilevel analyses. Strategic recommendations include:
 - Work with partners and stakeholders to identify and reach consensus on priority research areas in basic behavioral and social sciences.
 - Promote the value of basic behavioral and social sciences research throughout the NIH community.
 - Encourage research that bridges basic and applied behavioral and social sciences.
 - Develop better research infrastructure by encouraging the identification of human and animal populations, birth cohorts, and community populations for future longitudinal studies.
2. **Interdisciplinary research:** OBSSR will facilitate collaborative research across the full range of disciplines and stakeholders necessary to fully elucidate the complex determinants of health and health systems challenges. Such collaborations will yield new conceptual frameworks, methods, measures, and technologies that will speed the improvement of population health. Strategic recommendations include:
 - Engage the scientific community through symposia, working groups, and ad hoc committees to identify research areas that can be effectively investigated using interdisciplinary approaches.
 - Encourage and support the development of funding opportunity announcements and Requests for Proposals to address the areas identified for interdisciplinary study.
 - Provide education and training activities to facilitate interdisciplinary research among biomedical, behavioral, and social science researchers and practitioners. Strive for appropriate representation of scientific disciplines across the natural sciences (e.g., psychology, biology), mathematics and computer science, social sciences (e.g., anthropology, economics, communications, political science, public health), and applied sciences beyond traditional health-related fields (e.g., business, education, engineering).
 - Identify, document, and share with key audiences studies that demonstrate the value of integrating social and behavioral sciences perspectives, constructs, and measures in health research.
 - Develop metrics and methods needed to demonstrate the economic benefits and public health impacts of rigorous, integrated biopsychosocial health research.
 - Collaborate in the development of curricula, modules, and materials to train behavioral, social, and biomedical scientists to design and conduct interdisciplinary research.
 - Strengthen the behavioral and social sciences research methods and analyses to support interdisciplinary biopsychosocial health research. Increase the degree to which behavioral and social scientists have the capacity to help fulfill OBSSR's mandate and the NIH mission.

3. **Systems-thinking approaches to health:** OBSSR will stimulate systems thinking and modeling approaches to research that integrates multiple levels of analysis—from cells to society—required to understand the ways in which individual, contextual, and organizational factors interact over time to determine health status. Strategic recommendations include:
 - Facilitate the development and application of conceptual frameworks and tools needed for the application of systems thinking to the study of human health and its determinants.
 - Promote and support the development of biometrics, and the maintenance and widespread use of databases containing genomic information as well as biological, social, and behavioral data related to health.
 - Contribute to the development of analytical frameworks, methods, and algorithms capable of integrating, analyzing, and interpreting highly diverse data with varying metrics from research on genomic sequences, molecules, behavior, and social systems.
 - Collaborate in the development of curricula, modules, and materials required to train health scientists in the application of systems thinking and tools.
 - Encourage the application of systems-organizing principles among stakeholder organizations in the behavioral and social sciences, and promote the development of systems-organizing expertise among leaders, policymakers, and researchers.
 - Contribute to the science of dissemination to understand the factors promoting or impeding the adoption and implementation of research by health care providers, insurers, policymakers, and the public.
 - Improve the dissemination of science by publicizing successful examples of collaborative research, fostering collaboration with health care delivery systems to translate research into practice, and encouraging a broad research dissemination mandate throughout NIH.
4. **Population impact:** OBSSR will work with its NIH partners to identify key problems in population health where scientists, practitioners, and decision makers can work together to accelerate the translation, implementation, dissemination, and adoption of behavioral and social sciences research findings. Strategic recommendations include:
 - Collaborate in research on high-priority health issues that transcend the boundaries of individual NIH ICs, such as obesity, injury and violence, pain, parenting, and the management of chronic diseases.
 - Develop and disseminate standards of evidence for the design, implementation, and reporting of biopsychosocial research of the highest quality and rigor.
 - Facilitate a dialogue among researchers regarding the nature of evidence (e.g., randomized controlled trials versus qualitative methods) for behavioral and social science research.
 - Help to define and establish consensus on terms such as dissemination, implementation, translation, and adoption.
 - Use problem-focused research to strengthen the science of dissemination and the dissemination of evidence-based behavioral and social science.

Capacity Building and Support

OBSSR stresses that three additional approaches are central to its ability to achieve its strategic aims: partnership, education and training, and communications. The key elements of OBSSR's vision underscore the need for effective partnerships across NIH. It is noted that "many of the urgent health problems transcend the boundaries of individual ICs. A systems-oriented approach requires innovation, new thinking, and new methods as basic research produces new knowledge about the multilevel complexities of health and disease." In addition, OBSSR is strengthening partnerships with partners such as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and its affiliated National Center for Health Marketing, the Agency for Health Research and Quality, the National Science Foundation, **the Consortium of Social Science Associations**, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and other federal agencies.

In the area of communications, concrete steps taken in this area will include:

- Promoting the development, maintenance, and widespread use of databases containing longitudinal social and behavioral data related to health.
- Identifying or creating dissemination channels for sharing social and behavioral sciences perspectives, constructs, measures, and findings in health research.
- Developing interdisciplinary models for biopsychosocial research that successfully integrate the social and behavioral sciences into biomedical research.

It is emphasized that "communications is a multidirectional process that links communities of research and practice. Public health interventions cannot save lives if they are not implemented, and research cannot improve health if it is not informed by the needs and experiences of practitioners."

OBSSR plans to continue to initiate and support a broad range of education and training experiences in intramural and extramural research programs at NIH, consistent with its mission. The two key areas of focus for OBSSR in this area include: 1) Fostering collaborative research skills in the social and behavioral science; and 2) Promoting behavioral and social sciences within the NIH community.

Finally, it is noted that the "development of this prospectus has been and will continue to be a dynamic process."

To read the prospectus go to: www.thehillgroup.com/OBSSR_Prospectus.pdf

NIH ISSUES REVISED PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY

Responding to the recently enacted Consolidate Appropriations Act, 2009, on January 11, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued a notice (NOT-OD-08-033), *Revised Policy on Enhancing Public Access to Archived Publications Resulting from NIH-Funded Research*, that its once voluntary Public Access Policy ([NOT-OD-05-022](http://www.nih.gov/NOT-OD-05-022)) is now mandatory, effective April 7, 2008. To implement the policy the notice states:

1. The NIH Public Access Policy applies to all peer-reviewed articles that arise, in whole or in part, from direct costs funded by NIH, or from NIH staff, that are accepted for publication on or after April 7, 2008.
2. Institutions and investigators are responsible for ensuring that any publishing or copyright agreements concerning submitted articles fully comply with this Policy.
3. PubMed Central (PMC) is the NIH digital archive of full-text, peer-reviewed journal articles. Its content is publicly accessible and integrated with other databases (see: <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/>).
4. The final, peer-reviewed manuscript includes all graphics and supplemental materials that are associated with the article.
5. Beginning May 25, 2008, anyone submitting an application, proposal or progress report to the NIH must include the PMC or NIH Manuscript Submission reference number when citing applicable articles that arise from their NIH funded research. This policy includes applications submitted to the NIH for the May 25, 2008 due date and subsequent due dates.

For costs that can be specifically identified with a particular project or activity the notice refers individuals to NIH Grants Policy Statement, http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/nihgps_2003/NIHGPs_Part2.htm#_Toc54600040

For more information regarding the NIH Public Access Policy contact the Office of Extramural Research, NIH, 1 Center Drive, Room 144, Bethesda, MD 20892-0152, Email: PublicAccess@nih.gov, or visit the Website at <http://publicaccess.nih.gov>.

NEW NSF SOLICITATION: SCIENCE OF SCIENCE AND INNOVATION POLICY

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has issued a new solicitation for its program on the Science of Science and Innovation Policy (SciSIP). The proposal deadline is March 18, 2008.

The SciSIP program, according to NSF, supports "fundamental research that create new explanatory models, analytics tools and datasets designed to inform the nation's public and private sectors about the processes through which investments in science and engineering research are transformed into social and economic outcomes." Presidential Science Adviser John Marburger raised the issue of how to measure returns from research and development investments at speeches at the COSSA Annual Meeting and the American Association for the Advancement of Science policy forum in 2005.

NSF indicates that the FY 2008 competition includes three emphasis areas: Analytical Tools, Model Building, and Data Development and Augmentation. The research should develop and use techniques for retrospective and prospective analyses. It should also provide insights into factors that propagate new ideas at levels from the molecular functioning of the human brain to the organizational, state, national, and international levels. The solicitation also calls for research that improves and expands science metrics and datasets. NSF is also interested in the use of virtual organizations or collaboratories by social and behavioral scientists in the discovery process.

The estimated number of awards is 15 to 20 with anticipated funding of \$7 million. The awards are expected to range from \$50,000 to \$400,000 in total costs with durations of up to three years. If the project involves major data collections, additional funds may be made available.

For more information: Kaye Husbands Fealing, khusband@nsf.gov and after January 20, Julia Lane, jlane@nsf.gov or 703/292-7267.

For the full solicitation go to: http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=501084&org=SBE

NIDA INVITES COMMENTS ON ITS DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

For the past three decades, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has supported research to prevent and treat drug abuse and addiction and mitigate the impact of their consequences, particularly the spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. Recently, the NIDA has undergone a strategic planning process gathering recommendations from the National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse and from ongoing dialogue with stakeholder groups to establish achievable goals and objectives for the future. The public is invited to review this draft plan and provide comments.

NIDA's Draft Strategic Plan outlines four major goal areas - Prevention, Treatment, HIV/AIDS, and Cross Cutting Priorities - each with Strategic Objectives that will guide NIDA's research agenda for the future.

The plan can be accessed by at <http://www.drugabuse.gov/StrategicPlan/Index.html>. Send comments via E-mail to stratplan@nida.nih.gov or by mail to National Institute on Drug Abuse, Attn: Draft Strategic Plan, 6001 Executive Blvd., Suite 5213, MSC 9561, Bethesda, MD 20892-9561. Comments must be E-mailed or postmarked by Wednesday, February 6.

2007 HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION AWARD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The winners of the 2007 *Award for Excellence in Human Research Protection* were announced by the Health Improvement Institute (HII) on December 10, 2007.

Awards are given for demonstrated excellence in promoting the well being of people who participate in research. The winners were:

- *University of Kentucky (UK)*, for its best practice, *Online Clinical Trials Principal Investigator Self Assessment Form*. The form is designed to educate the University's researchers on the mechanisms by which human subjects are protected. The self-assessment provides researchers an opportunity to improve human research protections performance of their own accord. The result of the self-assessment also provides useful information to the UK Office of Research Integrity (ORI) for identifying needed education/training initiatives for researchers, their staff, UK ORI staff, and Institutional Review Board members.
- *Washington University at St. Louis*, for its innovation, *Internet Research Guideline*. This guideline is designed for researchers and Institutional Review Board members. It provides information on the ethical considerations and concerns associated with research conducted via the Internet.

Created by HII, the Office of Human Research Protection was the founding sponsor of the awards programs. Judges and Committee and Award Advisory Board members are volunteers. For more information on the awards contact the HII's Awards Coordinator at 301-320-097 or by email at hii@hii.org or go to www.hii.org.

NCI TRANSITION CAREER DEVELOPMENT AWARD TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY

According to the National Cancer Institute (NCI), despite substantial and local efforts that have been made to reduce cancer morbidity and mortality in the general population, it is estimated that nearly 1.5 million men and women were diagnosed with and 559,650 men and women died of cancer of all sites in 2007. Past patterns of cancer incidence and mortality predict that a disproportionate share of cancer incidence and mortality increase in the U.S. will be borne by minorities.

Specifically, the Institute emphasizes that cancer rates for stomach, liver, gall bladder, and cervix are higher in Hispanics than in non-Hispanics whites. Stomach and liver cancer incidence and death rates are more than twice as high in Asian American/Pacific Islanders as in Caucasians, whereas cancer mortality rates from prostate, stomach, and cervical cancers among African Americans are more than twice those for Caucasians. Accordingly, a reduction in the overall cancer mortality rate in minority populations would substantially impact known cancer statistics.

The Institute recognizes that a major obstacle to developing a stronger national minority cancer research effort has been the lack of significant strategic training programs for minority students and scientists in cancer research. NCI also acknowledges that progress in realizing a significant increase in the number of competitive minority cancer researchers has been disappointing. A greater involvement of minority candidates, who possess the appropriate cultural perspectives, is integral to a successful national minority cancer research effort involving more minority patients and populations.

To this end, the Institute has issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) that represents the continuation of a NCI program to make possible the diversification of the cancer research workforce via facilitation of the transition of investigators from minority groups underrepresented in biomedical research. NCI is primarily interested in individuals with clinical doctoral degrees as well as those with doctoral degrees working in the areas of cancer prevention, control, behavioral, or population science research, from the mentored stage of career development in academic cancer research to the independent stage. This goal is achieved by providing protected time through salary and research support for three years to: postdoctoral individuals or junior faculty in mentored positions transitioning into their first independent position; and investigators within the first two years of their first independent cancer research position, to initiate and develop their independently-supported cancer research programs.

Because the nature and scope of the proposed research will vary from application to application, it is anticipated that the size of each award will also vary. Direct costs are limited to up to \$75,000 per annum salary and up to \$50,000 per annum for research support costs. Fringe benefits based on the sponsoring institution's rate are provided in addition to the salary. The FOA uses the NIH Career Transition (K22) funding mechanism. For more information see: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-08-047.html>.

APPLICATIONS WANTED TO DEVELOP COMPLEX MODELS OF ORAL HEALTH BEHAVIOR

Recognizing the need to develop conceptual frameworks, models or theories that explain the interrelationships between the various behavioral and social factors, both within and across levels of domains, which contribute to health and oral health, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) has issued a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) seeking applications to develop and test complex models that have the potential to advance significantly an understanding of oral health and/or oral health behavior, and inform how best to improve oral health.

According to NIDCR, theories and models are needed that go beyond description to propose mechanisms by which factors at the biological, individual, social, health services, and/or population levels influence oral health and influence one another (i.e., "systems" approaches). Such complex, explanatory models would allow for better prediction of oral health outcomes, and for identification of potential targets of intervention that could lead to meaningful improvements in oral health.

Examples of applications of potentially high significance include, but are not limited to, those that:

- Propose novel contributors to oral health in the context of an explanatory model
- Integrate existing research findings about key contributors to oral health
- Identify novel targets or approaches to intervention

Applications are expected to vary in the scope of models tested, collaborations involved, etc., depending on the research questions and goals of the project. Examples of applications of appropriate scope include, but are not limited to:

- Models that integrate across systems (biologic, individual, social)
- Models that integrate across disciplines or fields (languages, concepts, theories)
- Models adapted from other fields (economics, engineering, physics) or other health fields (behavioral medicine, chronic illness, stress and coping, substance abuse, mental health) and applied to oral health behavior
- Adaptive treatment models that account for multiple decision pathways in health behaviors
- Models that allow for multiple moderator and mediator relationships among key contributors to health

Methods proposed should be appropriate to the study questions and aims. A range of methods is expected to be appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- Real time assessment of the determinants of oral health behaviors in non-clinical settings
- Observational coding studies that allow for analysis of complex social interactions in laboratory, clinic, or natural settings (e.g., naturally-occurring family interactions regarding health, interactions between patients and oral health professionals, etc.)
- Use of complex modeling systems (e.g., agent-based modeling, dynamic network analysis) to test complex models of health and oral health behavior
- Analysis of merged data sets and secondary data analysis, testing complex models of health and oral behavior

The Institute is particularly interested in models accounting for self-care health behaviors related to maintaining dental and oral health, seeking preventive care or treatment, engaging in health behaviors strongly associated with oral health or disease (e.g., tobacco, alcohol or other drug use, attention to nutrition, management of diabetes, dating disorders), and health behaviors related to serious or chronic illnesses of the craniofacial complex (e.g., cancers, craniofacial anomalies, infection related to HIV, TMJ).

Letters of Intent are due January 25, 2008 and October 17, 2008. For more information see:
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-DE-08-009.html>

NIH SUPPLEMENTS GRANTS FOR STUDYING INTERACTIONS AMONG SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND GENETIC FACTORS IN HEALTH

Currently, powerful genetic methods are being used for identifying common genomic factors that influence health and disease-related phenotypes and outcomes. These studies are designed to identify relationships between genes with observable traits such as body weight or the presence or absence of a disease or condition. Within this context, the Institute of Medicine Report, "Genes, Behavior and the Social Environment: Moving Beyond the Nature-Nurture Debate," supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), suggests that examining the interactions among genetic, social environments, and behavioral factors could greatly enhance the understanding of health and illness. The report also recommends ways to foster transdisciplinary research teams necessary to more fully examine the questions raised by these research gaps. It can be found at <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3740/24591/36574.aspx>. OBSSR is leading the implementation of the recommendations produced the report.

How genetic, behavioral, and social factors interact in human physiological processes and differentially influence disease expression and health outcomes remains understudied. A number of research gaps have been identified including the following: (1) genetic studies that explore the relationship between genotypes and quantitative traits often do not include social and behavioral factors, and (2) social and behavioral research studies rarely include consideration of genetic factors and related mechanisms when studying social and/or behavioral phenomena.

The FOA seeks grant applications for human and non-human studies to advance our understanding of the interactions among genetic, social and behavioral factors that influence the processes affecting variability in disease and health progression and outcomes. The program is focused on questions concerning the effects of (1) the interaction of genetic and social or behavioral factors and (2) gene-environment-behavioral interactions; and to better understand how the interaction of behaviors and social environmental factors affect gene expression, disease and behavior phenotypes and health outcomes.

To bridge these gaps, the announcement is designed to stimulate theoretically and methodologically rigorous research that integrates genetics, behavioral, and social sciences research efforts to specifically address questions of gene-environment-behavior interactions. It provides the opportunity for current NIH-funded grantees whose research is either (1) social and/or behavioral science-oriented research to add a genetic/genomic component or (2) genetic-focused research to add social and behavioral factors into their research plan. In either case, the proposed research must be designed to elucidate how the interactions between genetic and social and/or behavioral factors contribute to health and disease. The proposed research can expand the scope of the original project and should be a logical extension of the goals and objectives of the parent grant

To be considered responsive to the announcement, (1) the proposed research must include unambiguous, interdisciplinary perspectives, (2) the hypothesis(es) of the relationship(s) between the genetics, behaviors, social environment, and/or social processes must be clearly stated, (3) hypothesis about the proposed study should investigate how the interactions (not associations) among these variables influence the outcomes under study, and (4) the proposed

study should be embedded in a well articulated set of research questions or hypothesis generated from genetic, social and/or behavioral sciences research.

Through the Office of the Director, OBSSR intends to commit up to \$3 million dollars available in FY 2008 to fund 10 to 20 awards across three Program Announcements. <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-065.html> (R01); <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-066.html> (R21); and <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-08-067.html> (P01, P20, P50, P60, U01, U10, U54)

Awards are contingent upon the availability of funds and the submission of a sufficient number of meritorious applications.

Letters of Intent are due on April 13, 2008 and full proposals on May 13, 2008.

NIH Institutes and Centers supporting the FOA include: the Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine; Cancer; Eye; Human Genome; Aging; Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases; Child Health and Human Development; Drug Abuse; Deafness and Other Communication Disorders; Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Mental Health; Neurological Disorders and Stroke; Nursing; and the Office of Dietary Supplements.

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