COSSA Washington UPDATE

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In This Issue

We apologize for the delay in this week's COSSA Washington Update. We were experiencing technical difficulties with our mailing system.

Still Time to Register for the COSSA Colloquium
November 4 and 5

There is still time to register for the COSSA Colloquium on Social and Behavioral Science and Public

Policy. Come hear Senator Elizabeth Warren, Acting NSF Director Cora Marrett, NIH Deputy Director Lawrence Tabak, new Census Director John Thompson, and *New York Times* blogger and Columbia Journalism School Professor Thomas Edsall.

In addition, the meeting will feature panels on changes regarding race in America, the difficulties with America's political institutions, and changes in how we live now. Finally, COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver will reflect on his 30 years as a lobbyist for the social sciences. A reception will be held in his honor at the conclusion of the first day.

Register here by Friday, October 25 to save $75 on registration!

Government Reopens: Congress Continues to Seek Budget Solutions

The October 17 re-opening of the Federal government and the raising of the debt ceiling has staved off further fiscal disasters. At the same time, the search for some solution to the budgetary stalemate remains elusive.

The bill that the Senate proposed and the House finally agreed to extends to January 15 the Continuing Resolution (CR) that has been funding the federal government since FY 2014 began on October 1. The overall discretionary funding level in the bill is $988 billion. The CR extension also includes the provision inserted by Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) that restricts funding for the National Science Foundation's political science program.

As part of the agreement, the House and Senate budget committees, led by their chairpersons, Rep. Paul Ryan (R-OH) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), are now trying to negotiate an overall FY 2014 discretionary spending level as well as other provisions that might include the end of sequestration, entitlement reform, and revenue increases. The starting points for the negotiators are the House-passed Budget Resolution figure of $968 billion and the Senate-passed Budget Resolution number of $1.058 trillion, which is also the number in the Administration's budget proposal. Their deadline, under the legislation, is December 13, 2013.

One of the interesting questions is whether the whole FY 2014 appropriations process will get solved by another extension of the CR lasting through the entire fiscal year. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) has been declaring her desire to see at least another omnibus bill that would provide individual agency budget numbers. It would also allow an attempt to remove the Coburn Amendment.

However, what has become increasingly clear, even to members of Congress, is the diminished role of the appropriators in the whole budgeting process. Rep. David Price (D-NC), a political scientist and a long-time member of the appropriations committee, recently wrote in an article in *Politico*: "The appropriations process-- the hallmark of Congress' constitutional authority and wellspring of our power to conduct oversight and set national priorities-- is on life support and in danger of total collapse." Another long-time committee member Rep. James Moran (D-VA) blames the elimination of earmarks for the decline of regular order. He told CQ: "The public has been taught to hate earmarks. Since we eliminated earmarks, the appropriations process has been stuck-- it's dead. That's because members don't have any skin in the game."

Without any leverage to return to what Price noted was the Appropriations Committee's role in restraining partisanship and with a substantial portion of the House Republicans still committed to slashing domestic discretionary spending (188 voted to keep the government closed, including all but one GOP member of the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee), coming to some agreement will require a major accomplishment by those who seek solutions, rather than obstruction.

NSF Back in Business: Marrett Decries Funding Lapse

The National Science Foundation (NSF) resumed business following the reopening of the government on October 17. During the shutdown no proposals were received or distributed for peer review, no review panels were convened, no new awards were made, and no existing awards received payments. Acting NSF Director Cora Marrett, in a note to the scientific community, declared: "The collective impacts of the funding lapse and sequestration will ripple across the scientific community for the foreseeable future, hindering the science and engineering progress so vital to our nation's future prosperity."

In addition, she noted: "It will take time and extra effort to work through the backlog of activities. We are establishing priorities that will enable us to resume normal operations as quickly as possible while minimizing extra burden on our already hardworking staff. It's important for us in this timeframe to focus on re-establishing core functions, such as receiving, reviewing and awarding/declining proposals, as well as oversight and management of existing awards."

NSF has resumed accepting proposals through its FastLane system, although the Foundation expects to announce revised dues dates for those proposals whose deadlines were between October 1 and 25. In addition, new funding opportunities will have proposal deadlines determined by program officers.

Since no proposal reviews were carried out during the shutdown, NSF will reschedule the panels, but not for a while. Those doing ad hoc mail reviews can now submit them through FastLane. NSF also begs indulgence from its goal of providing funding answers within a six month window. New grants and other funding mechanisms will be processed as soon as is practicable.

Those grant recipients who have project reports due should submit them as soon as possible through research.gov. Those investigators seeking no-cost extensions should submit the requests through FastLane.

Marrett also announced the cancellation of Advisory Committee meetings until December, unless the Acting Director grants an exemption. The Advisory Committee for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate was scheduled to meet on November 14 and 15.

Finally, noting that the agreement reopening the government only extends funding until January 15, Marrett expressed that hope that "a longer term solution will be found that will provide the funding predictability needed to plan and support our research and education programs, as well as relief from the growing negative effects of sequestration."

NIH Works to Deal with Backlog Due to Shutdown

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), like other federal agencies, is working to make up for time lost to the government shutdown. The shutdown forced 75 percent of the agency's workforce to remain off the job. NIH could not issue new grants or contracts to scientists who had successfully competed for funding. Reviews of new proposals were put on hold resulting in a backlog.

The agency has announced that it working to reestablish dates for grant and contract submissions, decide how to handle missed review meetings, and reschedule dates for training and other activities that were cancelled due to the government closure. According to the interim guidance on resumption of NIH extramural activities, all October grant application submission deadlines will be rescheduled to the November timeframe. Specific dates will be announced in a future Notice.

Additionally, peer review meetings that were scheduled for October 1-17 are being rescheduled. The specific revised dates will be published in the NIH Guide.

Sally Rockey, deputy director for extramural research, noted in her blog, Extramural Nexus, the shutdown came at "one of the agency's busiest periods and it is going to take some time to bring the extramural program back to full strength."

NCHS Is Back: New Data on Obesity Prevalence

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has released new data on the Prevalence of Obesity Among Adults: United States 2011-2012, taken from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). The report finds that more than a third (34.9 percent) of U.S. adults were obese in 2011-2012, holding steady from 2009-2010. The non-Hispanic Asian population had the lowest prevalence of obesity (10.8 percent), followed by the non-Hispanic white (32.6 percent), Hispanic (32.6 percent), and non-Hispanic black (47.8 percent) populations.

DBASSE Convenes Policy Roundtable of the Behavioral and Social Sciences

The Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE) at the National Academies convened a Policy Roundtable of the Behavioral and Social Sciences, which met for the first time on September 26 to hear presentations and discussion on the application of behavioral economics to public policies and programs. The Roundtable brings together policymakers, government producers of data and research, funders of behavioral and social science research, and relevant academic and other researchers who have had policy experience in the federal government to explore ways in which the behavioral and social sciences can better inform and otherwise contribute to more effective and efficient policies and programs of government.

David T. Ellwood, Dean of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government chairs The Roundtable, which is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Miron L. Straf, DBASSE, is the Roundtable Director.

Rigorously Applying Behavioral Science

Sendhil Mullainathan, Harvard University, gave a presentation on "Behavioral Policy Design." He highlighted some of the foundational behavioral science studies that first demonstrated how subtle changes in policy could lead to significant shifts in behavior. Comparisons of countries that rely on "opt in" organ donation (where a person must positively state that they want to be an organ donor) versus "opt out" (where a person is automatically assumed to be a donor unless they say otherwise) found much higher percentages of donors in "opt out" countries. Similarly, researchers have found much higher rates of 401(k) enrollment when employees are automatically enrolled in the program. These studies, Mullainathan explained, demonstrate the power of the default option.

Another category of important behavioral research shows the role norms play in shaping behavior. Studies in areas ranging from hotel towel use to energy conservation to voting have shown that people are more likely to take a certain action (reuse their towels, save energy, vote) when told their peers behave the same way. This insight can also explain why some well-intentioned public awareness efforts fail. Mullainathan used the example of a poster in New York aimed at discouraging drop outs that reads, "7,000 high school students drop out every school day." The lesson people might take away from this, he explained, is that it's okay to drop out-- look how many people are doing it.

Mullainathan cautioned that these tools are not surefire ways to change behavior. One study automatically enrolled people receiving the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) in a program that gave them a portion of their refund in savings bonds, as a way to encourage the low-income population to save more. However the same small percentage of people took the savings bond regardless of what the default option was. Another study, testing several factors that could impact responses to a loan advertisement mailed to a bank's customers, found some variables had an impact while others had none, seemingly without explanation. Mullainathan concluded that psychological research is very good at isolating factors that impact behavior under controlled, experimental conditions, but less successful at applying those lessons to a real-world context, where it is sometimes difficult to control for other variables.

He suggested a process for creating real-world applications for behavioral science research consisting of four stages: defining the problem, diagnosing the behaviors underlying the problem, designing a way to address those behaviors, and testing whether the intervention is successful. He argued that the "diagnosis" phase is critical, and sometimes overlooked. For example, surveys have found that employees would like to save more, but don't always follow through-- indicating why an opt-out 401(k) enrollment program might be successful. In the EITC study, however, a majority of participants already had specific plans for spending their refunds, so they were not interesting in saving. Mullainathan argued that for behavioral interventions to be successful, diagnosis must be taken more seriously, particularly when the costs of testing an intervention are high.

Applying Behavioral Economics for Social Good

Josh Wright, Executive Director of the non-profit organization ideas42, explained how his organization tries to use the insights of behavioral research to advance social welfare. Ideas42's mission is "to help millions of people by applying the theories of Behavioral Economics and Behavioral Psychology to create real world solutions to real world problems." They work with governments, foundations, non-profits, and private sector businesses (who have socially responsible goals) to implement behavioral science insights through education, improving existing policies and programs, and creating new programs and research.

Wright discussed some of the projects ideas42 has undertaken. One project attempted to reduce car accident deaths during the holiday/summer season in a South African province. The ideas42 team created a lottery in which all licensed drivers were automatically entered-- unless they had received a ticket for unsafe driving. Wright explained that this program made the problem more visible, relied on the value of small probabilities, and leveraged loss aversion. The lottery seems to have been successful; car accident deaths dropped from the previous year (both in total numbers of deaths and average deaths per day).

Another project was aimed at improving on-time rent payments. Some of the impeding factors the researchers uncovered included considering the end of the ten-day grace period as the "real" due date, not caring about the late fee, and not taking advantage of online payments. Entering those who paid on time into a raffle doubled on-time payments.

Yet, another project targeted the much higher rate of HIV infection in South African school-age girls compared to boys. One contributing factor to this phenomenon was "sugar daddy" relationships, where girls had sex with older men. The team realized that many of the public awareness campaigns, while trying to educate girls about the risks of HIV infection, unintentionally reinforced the idea that sugar daddies were a good way to get money. They also realized that the taboo against intergenerational relationships was rarely discussed-and consequently, young girls were not as concerned about the negative stigma of participating in such a relationship. Ideas42 suggested a strategy that would make the norm against such relationships more conspicuous (e.g., campaigns with the message "sugar daddy relationships are gross") and not send the unintentional message that having a sugar daddy is popular.

The final project Wright discussed involved financial counseling. He noted that many financial counseling sessions often provide information and advice, but the important action is supposed to be taken after the session is over. People often don't follow through on this "homework" because they get distracted, are overwhelmed, or procrastinate. Ideas42 designed an intervention comprised of sessions incorporating existing best practices along with behavioral interventions that took place during the session (helping people set up automatic transfers to savings or bill pay, or at least creating follow-up reminders to take those actions). The new sessions resulted in a 21 percent increase in savings for low-saving individuals.

Strengthening the Federal Government's Capacity to Implement Behavioral Insights

Maya Shankar, Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), gave a presentation on building capacity for behavioral insights in the federal government. She explained that the government can utilize the insights of behavioral science to implement policies that are more effective, less costly, and better serve its citizens; in addition, such work fits into the larger Obama Administration initiative to implement evidence-based policies. The U.K.'s Behavioral Insights Team (BIT), established in 2010, is a model for what the administration hopes to achieve. The BIT has demonstrated that small changes to the framing of policy can have significant behavioral impacts; its interventions are expected to bring in one billion pounds over five years.

Shankar used the acronym EAST (easy, attractive, social, timely) to explain some of the core principles behind effective behavioral policy interventions. Making things **easy** means taking advantage of the power of defaults, as demonstrated by the 401(k) research and a program called Save More Tomorrow, which encourages employees to pledge to automatically increase their retirement savings rate in the future (which, for one company, quadrupled the savings rate). Shankar also recommended removing frictions impeding action (as in the case of a program that advertised attic cleaning services as a way to encourage homeowners to insulate their attics), simplifying (e.g. federal student aid forms), and making action convenient (e.g., salad bars by the cash register).

To make things **attractive**, Shankar recommended novelty (calling carrots "X-ray vision carrots" increased children's consumption), as well as making sure the important parts are salient and easy to understand (as on tax forms). Shankar pointed out the importance of **social** norms, both positive and negative. She cautioned that when the goal is to improve outcomes, it is more effective to focus on the aspiration, not the reality. Finally, in order to make things **timely**, one must identify key moments (asking people to make a plan for action) and decision points (moving or starting a new job, for example).

She also emphasized the importance of a "test, learn, adapt" method that relies on rigorous evaluation and adaptation to ensure policies are as effective as possible. Shankar discussed how the Administration plans to incorporate behavioral insights into policymaking and improving existing policies; it is currently putting together its own behavioral insights team, which will be led by OSTP and be comprised of nodes within different federal agencies.

Some current trials underway include: modifying debt collection letters sent by the Department of Treasury to make them easier to understand, helping Health and Human Services' Office of Health Information Technology identify key timeframes when patients interact with healthcare to improve care delivery, and working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide better assistance to recently deployed veterans looking to re-enter the workforce.

Roundtable Membership

After the presentations, Roundtable members **Naomi Goldstein**, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services; **Mary Bohman**, Economic Research Service, Department of Agriculture; and **John H. Laub**, University of Maryland and former Director of the National Institute of Justice talked about applying behavioral economic insights in their respective areas.

Other members of the Roundtable are **Xavier de Souza Briggs**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; **Mark Doms**, Department of Commerce; **John Q. Easton**, Institute of Education Sciences, Department of Education; **Sherry Glied**, Wagner School of Public Service, New York University; **David R. Harris**, Tufts University; **Jennifer Hunt**, Department Labor; **J. Steven Landefeld**, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Department of Commerce; **Lisa M. Lynch**, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University; **Rebecca A. Maynard**, University of Pennsylvania; **Mark B. McClellan**, Engelberg Center for Health Care Reform, The Brookings Institution; **Donald B. Moulds**, Department of Health and Human Services; **Richard G. Newell**, Duke University Energy Initiative, Duke University; **Demetra Smith Nightingale**, Office of the

Assistant Secretary for Policy, Department of Labor; **Michael J. O'Grady**, O'Grady Health Policy, LLC; **Jean Lin Pao**, Office of Policy Development and Research, Department of Housing and Urban Development; and **Gregory K. Ridgeway**, National Institute of Justice, Department of Justice.

Committee on Population Meets; Discusses Current Studies

The National Academies' Committee on Population (CPOP), part of the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE), met on October 10-11. Chaired by Linda Waite of the University of Chicago, the CPOP meeting did not have its usual visitors from the federal agencies, who were conspicuously absent because of the government shutdown.

DBASSE Executive Director Robert Hauser opened the meeting by focusing on the issues facing the social and behavioral sciences in the current political environment. He reviewed many of the challenges related to the National Science Foundation's (NSF) reauthorization and appropriations funding problems, including the Coburn amendment restricting NSF's political science program. He indicated that, utilizing the Academies' communication capabilities, DBASSE will sponsor a congressional briefing on November 12. Speakers will include former Congressman and DBASSE Advisory Committee member Brian Baird (D-WA), former Congresswoman Nancy Johnson (R-CT), psychologist Robert Cialdini of Arizona State University, and Arthur "Skip" Lupia of the University of Michigan.

New Study of Social Mobility

Hauser also observed that it has been a long time since there has been a major national survey of social mobility; the last one was completed in 1973. CPOP is now in the process of correcting that problem. In June, NSF sponsored an expert meeting that considered options for a design for a new national survey on social mobility. At the meeting, top experts in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences presented concept papers addressing the main problems that must be solved in developing a new survey protocol. The meeting was co-chaired by David Grusky and Matt Snipp of Stanford University and discussed the possible content and measurement issues for this important study area. The meeting also afforded the opportunity for input from public and private organizations with interest in this area. Presentations from the meeting are available at: http://sites.nationalacademies.org/DBASSE/CPOP/DBASSE_083087.

Finally, Hauser noted that the DBASSE project related to revising the Common Rule for protecting human research participants continues. The March 2013 workshop report is available at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18383. While the National Institutes of Health (NIH) continues to try and fast track the revisions, the many agencies involved have slowed it down considerably. Perhaps, Hauser noted, by the end of the year the Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) will appear in the *Federal Register*.

Some members of CPOP expressed concern at the plans of the Bureau of Labor Statistics to terminate funding for the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth's 1979 cohort. Using the sequestration budget cuts as a justification, BLS Commissioner Erica Groshen decided this cohort was unsustainable. There is a proposal to take the 1979 cohort and bring it into the National Institute on Aging-sponsored Health and Retirement Survey, but some bureaucratic entanglements would need working out before that could happen.

Tom Plewes, CPOP's Director, informed the Committee about another project, The Determinants of Premature Death. A workshop, chaired by CPOP member Christine Bachrach, was held on September 18 that focused on "the state of the science of measuring the determinants of the causes of premature death, assess the availability and quality of data sources, and chart future courses of action to improve the understanding of the causes of premature death." Citing a number of studies, Plewes noted the importance of social and behavioral factors as contributories to early death. Some of the issues overlap with the recent report *U.S. Health in International Perspective: Shorter Lives, Poorer Health* (see Update, October 7, 2013).

Long Term Economic Effects of an Aging Population

Kevin Kinsella discussed another focus of CPOP, which are the long-term macroeconomic effects on the U.S. economy of the aging population. A new study will build on the recently completed first phase, whose report entitled "Aging and the Macroeconomy: Long-term Implications of an Older Population" was published in December 2012 and is available at: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13465. Ron Lee of the University of California, Berkeley, and Peter Orszag, former head of the Office of Management and Budget and now at CitiGroup, are co-chairing the study.

The Phase II study will incorporate quantitative modeling and projections including the Future Elderly Model devised by Dana Goldman of RAND and the University of California, so as to develop new insights about the long-run macroeconomic effects of the aging U.S. population. The study will evaluate the following:

- Long-term trends in the share of national output devoted to support of the retired population using a conceptual framework such as the National Transfer Accounts.
- The role of changing capital/labor ratios on productivity. Evaluate the role of international capital and labor movements. Will there be a reduction in the aggregate labor supply?
- How trends in labor force participation rates by cohorts, retirement behavior, and part-time work are likely to affect the sustainability of programs.
- The degree to which international migration can offset population aging.
- Trends in the productivity of older workers and productivity's relationship to continuing education, workplace design, and part-time employment opportunities.

Finally, Meredith Lane, director of DBASSE's Board on Environmental Change and Society, discussed a plan to scope a future workshop project that would feature topical presentations and discussion on recent advances in biodemography and expand the concept of biodemography to cross-species comparisons of social environments, social behaviors, and their effects on health, longevity, and life histories. Lane suggested the panel will identify and invite innovative researchers to present papers at the planning meeting. The workshop will take place in April 2014.

DBASSE is also in the early stages of looking at both the economic, fiscal and labor market impact of immigration as well as the integration of immigrants into the fabric of the U.S. We will hear more about these projects in the future.

Too Much Evidence to Ignore: New Findings on the Impact of Quality Preschool at Scale

The New America Foundation sponsored a presentation and panel that explored new research in the impact and importance of pre-K programs. This presentation and its panel were based on a newly released Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) report entitled Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education. The panel consisted of the New American Foundation's Early Education Initiative Director Lisa Guernsey, NYU Professor Hiro Yoshikawa, Senior Policy Analyst for the National Governors Association Albert Wat, Senior Policy Analyst for New America Laura Bornfreund, and Georgetown Professor Deborah Phillips.

The event began with Yoshikawa, one of the lead researchers for the report, presenting on the findings and their importance. With President Obama's proposal in this year's State of the Union to increase universal access to pre-K programs, it is vital for policymakers to understand best practices in these programs, he stated. Their research is unique in that it is a meta-analysis of 84 existing studies, which Yoshikawa and the panel believe will fill the gap that currently exists between the (lack of) substance in public discussion and the evidence shown in existing research, facilitating better-informed public policy. Further, Yoshikawa explained that this meta-analysis includes many at-scale studies, meaning that it more accurately accounts for universal conditions such as those in the President's proposal.

Professor Yoshikawa continued by detailing the key questions they sought to answer with their research and what the data found.

Does the evidence support investment in pre-K education? This is obviously an important consideration given the scale of the President's proposal and the current fiscal climate at the federal and state levels. Their research shows the answer to this question is an overwhelming yes. Monetarily, preschool programs can save anywhere from three to seven dollars for every one dollar spent. Additionally, they can produce an extra third of a year up to a full year of additional learning in reading and math for students, and their benefits are in evidence across all income levels.

Can preschool work at a universal level? This is a more difficult question for pre-K researchers to answer since existing studies have been smaller in scale. However, their combination of 84 studies, some of which are themselves large-scale studies, such as those in Boston and Tulsa, has shown promising results for a universal preschool program. As more states and cities begin to implement universal pre-K programs, the data will be more robust and more conclusions on best practices are possible.

Does preschool benefit all populations (i.e., different income levels, races, and ethnicities), and what contributes to a successful pre-K program? Their research suggests that all students who have participated in a pre-K program, in the aggregate, benefit from the program. Also, and promisingly for a national-level program, they found that lower-income children and dual-language learners benefit the most from a pre-K education. However, they stress that the quality and structure of the pre-K instruction is largely determinative in how effective these programs are. Additionally, other factors, such as active parent education and feedback, access to healthcare, and the design of the curricula play important roles as well and merit further research.

The panel began by looking at the larger picture of the implications of these findings. Notably, Phillips and Bornfreund were confident in the ability of a universal pre-K program to function, but conceded that it would be exceedingly difficult in the current budgeting environment to secure adequate funding for the types of programs their research recommends. Bornfreund stressed that the tough legislative and fiscal environment is unlikely to change in the near future and that thus far only Democrats have expressed interest in furthering this program at the federal level.

Phillips stated that her work in Tulsa-- one of the largest single studies included in the meta-analysis-- showed that increasing pay for pre-K educators and thus attracting more motivated and qualified teachers is a key factor in the outcomes of the preschool programs. Tulsa, according to Phillips, is an excellent case study to examine the effectiveness of larger-scale pre-K implementation: Tulsa has achieved high penetration-- the percentage of the population using the program-- and 20 percent of Tulsa residents are dual-language, a representation of the U.S. population in the near future.

Wat said there is reason for optimism coming from the state level. Many states with Democrat and Republican governors, such as Alabama, Colorado and Michigan, are taking action without federal leadership to invest in universal pre-K. He thinks that if these states develop their programs based on the research that they will be effective, and additional states will begin implementing similar programs. Many others, however, are unlikely to act without the impetus or funding from Washington.

APHA Holds Briefing on Disabilities Treaty

On October 17, the American Public Health Association (APHA) hosted a briefing on U.S. efforts to ratify the disabilities treaty, the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Judith Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, State Department, gave an overview of where ratification stands right now. (More information about the treaty is available here.)

The White House and State Department are committed to achieving ratification by the end of 2013, Heumann stated. A ratification effort last year, led by then-Senator John Kerry, failed after 36 senators signed a letter promising not to ratify any treaties during the lame duck session. Although the government shutdown stalled movement toward ratification, the Senate is expected to schedule hearings on the treaty by the end of October. Heumann explained that the CRPD, which protects persons with disabilities from discrimination, is critically important to enabling Americans with disabilities (including veterans) to travel, study, and work abroad. Thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the U.S. is already ahead of most countries in regard to preventing discrimination against people with disabilities, particularly in its ability to enforce anti-discrimination regulations. After conducting a review of the CRPD's requirements, the administration has determined that the U.S. would be in full compliance upon ratification-- no new legislative or budgetary actions would be required.

Heumann explained that even though the U.S. has already met the treaty's requirements, its failure to ratify the Convention takes it out of the international conversation about disability rights. One hundred and thirty eight countries (including the European Union) have already ratified the Convention. One of the major reasons to ratify is to help developing countries learn from our mistakes and benefit from our experience as they attempt to implement the CRPD.

The most vocal opposition to the CRPD's ratification has come from the Home School Legal Defense Association and the Heritage Foundation, who have speculated that ratification could threaten U.S. sovereignty; the government has found these claims to be baseless. Another objection is that the Convention's provision that persons with disabilities have access to reproductive health would force the U.S. to expand its abortion policies. However, Heumann explained, this provision merely entitles people with disabilities to equal access to any reproductive services that are available to non-disabled persons. The State Department has published a fact sheet that debunks some of these myths.

PCORI Launches Community-building "Pipeline to Proposal" Awards

On October 15, the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCIRI) launched its "Pipeline to Proposal" awards," designed to encourage the development of partnerships and health research project ideas among individuals and groups not usually involved in such efforts. The initiative will begin with a pilot program open to small groups of patients, researchers, clinicians, and other healthcare stakeholders in 13 western states the opportunity to apply for "Tier 1" awards of up to $15,000 each. PCORI intends to make up to 25 awards that will provide seed money to support recipients' interests in join together to develop patient-centered research ideas around shared interests.

Tier I awards provide seed money to individuals and groups who have healthcare research ideas and who believe in the promise of patient-centered research. The awards are designed to help build capacity and engage community around a common healthcare research interest. It is open to any individual patient, other healthcare stakeholders, or researchers-- or group of patients, stakeholders, or researchers-- oriented around a particular health issue and interested in developing a questions that can be addressed by comparative effectiveness research. The award is targeted to those who are not eligible or equipped to apply for funding from most other research funding sources, and the approved use of these funds is limited to community and capacity building.

The 13 eligible states include: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. **Applications are due Monday December 2, 2013.** For more information see http://www.pcori.org/funding-opportunities/pipeline-to-proposal-awards/.

Call for Proposals on the Effectiveness of Torture Prevention

The Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT) has released a call for proposals for researchers to contribute to its ongoing project on the effectiveness of torture prevention. The APT is seeking country researchers to work in 12 countries out of a shortlist of 26 countries: Albania, Armenia, Benin, Colombia, Georgia, Honduras, Hungary, India, Israel, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Tunisia, Zimbabwe. The work includes researching and drafting a chapter on the country's experience with incidence of torture and prevention measures since 1985, as well as gathering data to contribute to a comparative quantitative analysis of torture incidence and prevention.

Researchers with the relevant experience are invited to submit proposals, including a budget. The working language of the project is English, so a basic understanding of that language will be required. However, applicants may include a budget line for translation of documents. **The deadline for applications is November 1, 2013** and work on the project will begin in January 2014. The full call is available here.

COSSA's New Staff Member

Joshua McCrain has joined the COSSA staff as its Assistant Director for Government Relations. He replaces LaTosha Plavnik, who has decided to remain at home with her new baby. Josh will serve as COSSA's office manager, help COSSA enhance its communications efforts, and cover education and other issues.

He comes to COSSA after serving as a communications specialist for the State Employees Association of North Carolina in Raleigh. Prior to that, Josh completed internships at the National Democratic Institute in Washington, DC and on Capitol Hill in Rep. Mike McIntyre's (D-NC) office. He has an M.A. in Political Science and a B.A. in Political Science and Contemporary European Studies, both from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
Association of Research Libraries
Council on Social Work Education
Economic History Association
History of Science Society
Justice Research and Statistics Association
Midwest Sociological Society
National Association of Social Workers
North American Regional Science Council
North Central Sociological Association
Rural Sociological Society
Social Science History Association
Society for Anthropological Sciences
Society for Behavioral Medicine
Society for Empirical Legal Studies
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for Social Work and Research
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association

Centers and Institutes

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences
American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
Brookings Institution
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
Institute for Women's Policy Research
National Opinion Research Center
Population Reference Bureau
RTI International
RWJF Center for Health Policy at the University of New Mexico
Social Science Research Council
Vera Institute of Justice

University of Iowa
Johns Hopkins University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
University of Maryland
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse
University of Michigan
Michigan State University
University of Missouri, St. Louis
University of Minnesota
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University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
North Dakota State University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
University of Oklahoma
University of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
University of South Carolina
Stanford University
State University of New York, Stony Brook
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