



WASHINGTON UPDATE

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House COMPETES Bill Targets Social Science

On April 15, House Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith introduced the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015* (H.R. 1806). This is legislation to reauthorize the National Science Foundation (NSF). The bill is scheduled for a markup by the full House Science, Space, and Technology Committee on Wednesday, April 22.

While there are some noticeable changes from the bill that the scientific community rallied against last year (known as the FIRST Act), the new bill, authored by Science Committee Chairman Lamar Smith, continues to challenge the value of social and behavioral science research and restricts NSF's ability to drive its own research agenda. **COSSA strongly opposes this legislation** and released a [statement](#) on April 17 detailing its objections.

COSSA's full analysis of the bill can be found [here](#).

FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS

NIH Appoints Working Group for Precision Medicine Initiative

In March, National Institutes of Health (NIH) director Francis Collins appointed a team of individuals

to serve on the Advisory Committee to the NIH Director (ACD) Working Group on the Precision Medicine Initiative (PMI). The Working Group is expected to host public meetings to seek public input into the development of President Obama's proposed Precision Medicine Initiative. This group will help the NIH define "what can be learned from a study of this scale and scope, what issues will need to be addressed and considered as part of the study design, and what success would look like five and ten years out."

PMI was launched by President Obama on January 30 and called for initial funding of \$215 million in the President's FY 2016 budget request. This sum includes \$130 million dedicated to initiating the process of building a one million or more research cohort of individuals who will volunteer to share biological, environmental, lifestyle, and behavioral information and tissue samples with researchers. It is emphasized that "Participant input through representation on the working group, workshops and other feedback mechanisms will be central to the design and implementation of the study."

[Read on](#) for more information.

AHRQ 2014 Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report Shows Improved Overall Quality and Access, Lingering Disparities

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) has released its congressionally mandated report to Congress on the status of health care quality and disparities in the U.S. In past years, this information has been released as two separate reports (the *National Healthcare Quality Report* and the *National Healthcare Disparities Report*). For 2014, AHRQ has chosen to combine the two into the [National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report](#) (QDR). The agency believes that combining the reports "highlights the importance of examining quality and disparities together to gain a complete picture of health care." The 2014 report is shorter and more focused than prior year reports, although the complete data will be made available in the form of [chartbooks](#) that will be posted monthly beginning in April.

The report shows improvements in the insurance rates for non-Medicare-eligible adults and improvement in health care access for children. In addition, there were improvements in most of the measures of priority health care quality areas identified by the National Quality Strategy, including patient safety, person-centered care, effective treatment measures, and healthy living. However, the report found persistent disparities in the access to and quality of care available to racial and ethnic minority and low-income households. Though some disparities were reduced or eliminated (such as for childhood immunization rates), most did not improve, while some even grew larger (such as those related to hospice care and chronic disease management).

BTS Releases Annual Report

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) has released its [2013 Transportation Statistics Annual Report](#) (TSAR), which provides detailed information on the U.S. "transportation system, the system's performance, its contributions to the economy, and its effects on people and the environment." The congressionally mandated report provides detailed information and identifies data gaps on the extent of the U.S. transportation system, its physical condition, how it moves people and goods, its performance, transportation economics, transportation safety, the energy and environment, and the state of transportation statistics. The scope of the report is large: the U.S. transportation system is valued at \$7.7 trillion and encompasses four million miles of roads, 19,000 airports, 140,000 miles of railroads, 25,000 miles of waterways, and 2 million miles of

pipelines.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NIH: Collaborative Innovation Award, Clinical and Translational Science Award Program

The National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is inviting applications to stimulate innovative collaborative research in the NCATS Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) consortium. Because translating biomedical discoveries into clinical applications is essential to improving health and at the same time a complex process with high costs and substantial failure rates, the CTSA hubs are designed to promote advances in translational research and training at participating medical research institutions. NCATS recently released a funding opportunity announcement (FOA), *Collaborative Innovation Award, Clinical and Translational Science Award Program* ([PAR-15-172](#)), to enable collaboration among CTSA hubs to overcome system-wide barriers in translational effectiveness.

"Translation" is defined by NCATS as "the process of turning observations in the laboratory, clinic, and community into interventions that improve the health of individuals, and the public, from diagnostics and therapeutics in medical procedures and behavioral change."

The FOA is one of several sequential steps being taken by NCATS to evolve the CTSA program to augment its ability, as recommended by a recent Institute of Medicine report (see Update, [August 11, 2014](#)). It seeks to encourage all of the CTSA hubs to collaboratively conceptualize, develop, and implement multi-site innovative experimental approaches that overcome translational barriers in science, operations, and training

COSSA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

PAA/PRB Briefing Explores the Changing Landscape of Marriage

The Population Association of America, a COSSA governing member, and the Population Reference Bureau, also a COSSA member, held a congressional briefing on April 17 called "The Vow Factor: Marriage, Divorce and Family Formation & their Impact on Health and Well-Being." COSSA was a co-sponsor of the briefing. Moderated by Robert Moffitt of Johns Hopkins University, the briefing featured presentations on trends and consequences of changes in marriage and parenthood. Andrew J. Cherlin, Johns Hopkins University, gave a presentation on the education-based gap in the marriage rate. Lisa Berkman, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, discussed how single motherhood and maternity leave policies affect women's health much later in life. The final speaker, Elizabeth Peters, Urban Institute, spoke about incentives for couples to marry and father involvement. A video recording of the presentations will be posted on the Population Reference Bureau's [website](#).

EVENTS CALENDAR

[Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting](#), Chicago, IL, April 21-25, 2015

[Society of Behavioral Medicine Annual Meeting & Scientific Sessions](#), San Antonio, TX, April 22-25, 2015

[Population Association of America Annual Meeting](#), San Diego, CA, April 30-May 2, 2015
[American Association for Public Opinion Research Annual Conference](#), Hollywood, FL, May 14-17, 2015
[Law and Society Association Annual Meeting](#), Seattle, WA, May 28-31, 2015
[OBSSR 20th Anniversary Celebration](#), Bethesda, MD, June 23-25, 2015

A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA [webpage](#).

COSSA members who have an upcoming event they would like to see listed in the Events Calendar and on our website should send an email to jmilton@cozza.org.

Consortium of Social Science Associations Members

Governing Members

American Anthropological Association
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Economic Association
American Educational Research Association
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Criminology
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Geographers
Association of American Law Schools
Law and Society Association
Linguistic Society of America
Midwest Political Science Association
National Communication Association
Population Association of America
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Society for Research in Child Development

Membership Organizations

Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
American Evaluation Association
American Finance Association
American Psychosomatic Society
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
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
Rural Sociological Society
Social Science History Association
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for Social Work and Research
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society of Behavioral Medicine

Colleges and Universities

Arizona State University
Boston University
Brown University
Carnegie Mellon University
Clark University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Fielding Graduate University
George Mason University
Georgetown University
Harvard University
Indiana University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Michigan State University
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University of Maryland
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota
University of Missouri
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
University of Oklahoma

Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association

University of Pennsylvania
University of South Carolina
University of Texas, Austin
University of Texas, San Antonio
University of Virginia
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin, Madison
West Virginia University
Yale University

Centers and Institutes

American Academy of Arts and Sciences
American Academy of Political and Social Science
American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
The 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 Social Science Research,
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Institute for Women's Policy Research
NORC at the University of Chicago
Owens Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia
Population Reference Bureau
RTI International
Social Science Research Council
Vera Institute of Justice

COSSA

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research.

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